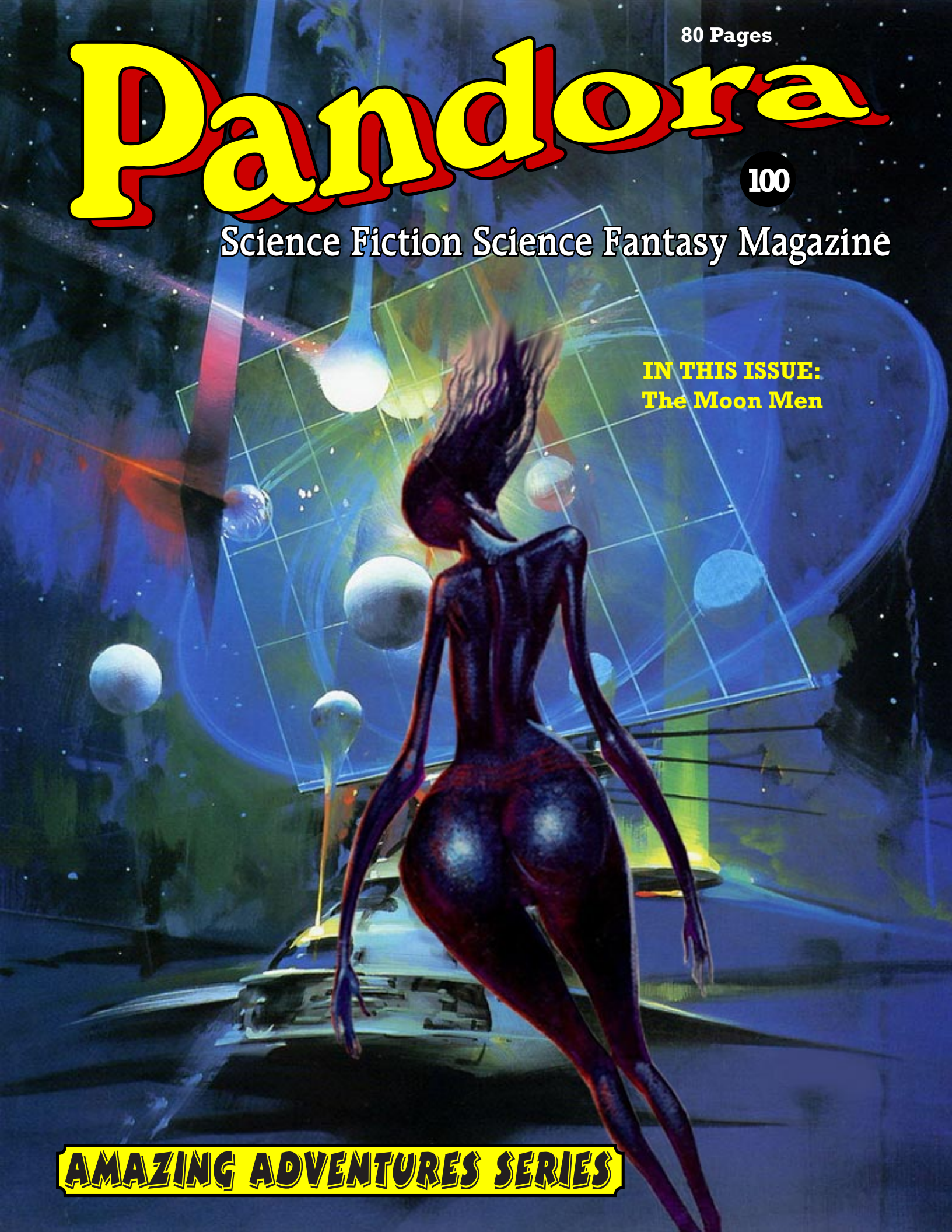
80 Pages
Pandora
100
Science Fiction Science Fantasy Magazine
IN THIS ISSUE:
The Moon Men
AMAZING ADVENTURES SERIES

Pandora

Science Fiction Science Fantasy Magazine

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THE MOON MEN

CHAPTER I.

A STRANGE MEETING

IT WAS EARLY in March, 1969, that I set out from my bleak camp on the desolate shore some fifty miles southeast of Herschel Island after polar bear. I had come into the Arctic the year before to enjoy the first real vacation that I had ever had. The definite close of the Great War, in April two years before, had left an exhausted world at peace-a condition that had never before existed and with which we did not know how to cope.

I think that we all felt lost without war-I know that I did; but I managed to keep pretty busy with the changes that peace brought to my bureau, the Bureau of Communications, readjusting its activities to the necessities of world trade uninfluenced by war. During my entire official life I had had to combine the two-communications for war and communications for commerce, so the adjustment was really not a Herculean task. It took a little time, that was all, and after it was a fairly well accomplished fact I asked for an indefinite leave, which was granted.

My companions of the hunt were three Eskimos, the youngest of whom, a boy of nineteen, had never before seen a white man, so absolutely had the last twenty years of the Great War annihilated the meager trade that had formerly been carried on between their scattered settlements and the more favored lands of so-called civilization.

But this is not a story of my thrilling experiences in the rediscovery of the Arctic regions. It is, rather, merely by way of explanation as to how I came to meet him again after a lapse of some two years.

We had ventured some little distance from shore when I, who was in the lead, sighted a bear far ahead. I had scaled a hummock of rough and jagged ice when I made the discovery and, motioning to my companion to follow me, I slid and stumbled to the comparatively level stretch of a broad floe beyond, across which I ran toward another icy barrier that shut off my view of the bear. As I reached it I turned to look

back for my companions, but they were not yet in sight. As a matter of fact I never saw them again.

The whole mass of ice was in movement, grinding and cracking; but I was so accustomed to this that I gave the matter little heed until I had reached the summit of the second ridge, from which I had another view of the bear which I could see was moving directly toward me, though still at a considerable distance. Then I looked back again for my fellows. They were no where in sight, but I saw something else that filled me with consternation-the floe had split directly at the first hummock and I was now separated from the mainland by an ever widening lane of icy water. What became of the three Eskimos I never knew, unless the floe parted directly beneath their feet and engulfed them. It scarcely seems credible to me, even with my limited experience in the Arctics, but if it was not that which snatched them forever from my sight, what was it?

I now turned my attention once more to the bear. He had evidently seen me and assumed that I was prey for he was coming straight toward me at a rather rapid gait. The ominous cracking and groaning of the ice increased, and to my dismay I saw that it was rapidly breaking up all about me and as far as I could see in all directions great floes and little floes were rising and falling as upon the bosom of a long, rolling swell.

Presently a lane of water opened between the bear and me, but the great fellow never paused. Slipping into the water he swam the gap and clambered out upon the huge floe upon which I tossed. He was over two hundred yards away, but I covered his left shoulder with the top of my sight and fired. I hit him and he let out an awful roar and came for me on a run. Just as I was about to fire again the floe split once more directly in front of him and he went into the water clear out of sight for a moment.

When he reappeared I fired again and missed. Then he started to crawl out on my diminished floe once more. Again I fired. This time I broke his shoulder, yet still he managed to clamber onto my floe and advance toward me. I thought that he would never die until he had reached me and wreaked his vengeance upon me, for though I pumped bullet after bullet into him he continued to advance, though at last he barely dragged himself forward, growling and grimacing horribly. He wasn't ten feet from me when once more my floe split directly between me and the bear and at the foot of the ridge upon which I stood, which now turned completely over, precipitating me into the water a few feet from the great, growling beast. I turned and tried to scramble back onto the floe from which I had been thrown, but its sides were far too precipitous and there was no other that I could possibly reach, except that upon which the bear lay grimacing at me. I had clung to my rifle and without more ado I struck out for a side of the floe a few yards from the spot where the beast lay apparently waiting for me.

He never moved while I scrambled up on it, except to turn his head so that he was always glaring at me. He did not

come toward me and I determined not to fire at him again until he did, for I had discovered that my bullets seemed only to infuriate him. The art of big game hunting had been practically dead for years as only rifles and ammunition for the killing of men had been manufactured. Being in the government service I had found no difficulty in obtaining a permit to bear arms for hunting purposes, but the government owned all the firearms and when they came to issue me what I required, there was nothing to be had but the ordinary service rifle as perfected at the time of the close of the Great War, in 1967. It was a great man-killer, but it was not heavy enough for big game.

The water lanes about us were now opening up at an appalling rate, and there was a decided movement of the ice toward the open sea, and there I was alone, soaked to the skin, in a temperature around zero, bobbing about in the Arctic Ocean marooned on a half acre of ice, with a wounded and infuriated polar bear, which appeared to me at this close range to be about the size of the First Presbyterian church at home.

I don't know how long it was after that that I lost consciousness. When I opened my eyes again I found myself in a nice, white iron cot in the sick bay of a cruiser of the newly formed International Peace Fleet which patrolled and policed the world. A hospital steward and a medical officer were standing at one side of my cot looking down at me, while at the foot was a fine looking man in the uniform of an admiral. I recognized him at once.

"Ah," I said, in what could have been little more than a whisper, "you have come to tell me the story of Julian 9th. You promised, you know, and I shall hold you to it."

He smiled. "You have a good memory. When you are out of this I'll keep my promise."

I lapsed immediately into unconsciousness again, they told me afterward, but the next morning I awoke refreshed and except for having been slightly frosted about the nose and cheeks, none the worse for my experience. That evening I was seated in the admiral's cabin, a Scotch highball, the principal ingredients of which were made in Kansas, at my elbow, and the admiral opposite me.

"It was certainly a fortuitous circumstance for me that you chanced to be cruising about over the Arctic just when you were," I had remarked. "Captain Drake tells me that when the lookout sighted me the bear was crawling toward me; but that when you finally dropped low enough to land a man on the floe the beast was dead less than a foot from me. It was a close shave, and I am mighty thankful to you and to the cause, whatever it may have been, that brought you to the spot."

"That is the first thing that I must speak to you about," he replied. "I was searching for you. Washington knew, of course, about where you expected to camp, for you had explained your plans quite in detail to your secretary before you left, and so when the President wanted you I was dispatched immedi-

ately to find you. In fact, I requested the assignment when I received instructions to dispatch a ship in search of you. In the first place I wished to renew our acquaintance and also to cruise to this part of the world, where I had never before chanced to be."

"The President wanted me!" I repeated.

"Yes, Secretary of Commerce White died on the fifteenth and the President desires that you accept the portfolio."

"Interesting, indeed," I replied; "but not half so interesting as the story of Julian 9th, I am sure."

He laughed good naturedly. "Very well," he exclaimed; "here goes!"

Let me preface this story, as I did the other that I told you on board the liner Harding two years ago, with the urgent request that you attempt to keep constantly in mind the theory that there is no such thing as time-that there is no past and no future-that there is only now, there never has been anything but now and there never will be anything but now. It is a theory analogous to that which stipulates that there is no such thing as space. There may be those who think that they understand it, but I am not one of them. I simply know what I know-I do not try to account for it. As easily as I recall events in this incarnation do I recall events in previous incarnations; but, far more remarkable, similarly do I recall, or should I say foresee? events in incarnations of the future. No, I do not foresee them-I have lived them.

I have told you of the attempt made to reach Mars in the Barsoom and of how it was thwarted by Lieutenant Commander Orthis. That was in the year 2026. You will recall that Orthis, through hatred and jealousy of Julian 5th, wrecked the engines of the Barsoom, necessitating a landing upon the moon, and of how the ship was drawn into the mouth of a great lunar crater and through the crust of our satellite to the world within.

After being captured by the Va-gas, human quadrupeds of the moon's interior, Julian 5th escaped with Nah-ee-lah, Princess of Laythe, daughter of a race of lunar mortals similar to ourselves, while Orthis made friends of the Kalkars, or Thinkers, another lunar human race. Orthis taught the Kalkars, who were enemies of the people of Laythe, to manufacture gunpowder, shells and cannon, and with these attacked and destroyed Laythe.

Julian 5th and Nah-ee-lah, the moon maid, escaped from the burning city and later were picked up by the Barsoom which had been repaired by Norton, a young ensign, who with two other officers had remained aboard. Ten years after they had landed upon the inner surface of the moon Julian 5th and his companions brought the Barsoom to dock safely at the city of Washington, leaving Lieutenant-Commander Orthis in the moon.

Julian 5th and the Princess Nah-ee-lah were married and in that same year, 2036, a son was born to them and was called Julian 6th. He was the great-grandfather of Julian 9th for whose story you have asked me, and in whom I lived again in the twenty-second century.

For some reason no further attempts were made to reach Mars, with whom we had been in radio communication for years. Possibly it was due to the rise of a religious cult which preached against all forms of scientific progress and which by political pressure was able to mold and influence several successive weak administrations of a notoriously weak party that had had its origin nearly a century before in a group of peace-at-any-price men.

It was they who advocated the total disarmament of the world, which would have meant disbanding the International Peace Fleet forces, the scrapping of all arms and ammunition, and the destruction of the few munition plants operated by the governments of the United States and Great Britain, who now jointly ruled the world. It was England's king who saved us from the full disaster of this mad policy, though the weaklings of this country aided and abetted by the weaklings of Great Britain succeeded in cutting the peace fleet in two, one half of it being turned over to the merchant marine, in reducing the number of munition factories and in scrapping half the armament of the world.

And then in the year 2050 the blow fell. Lieutenant-Commander Orthis, after twenty-four years upon the moon, returned to earth with one hundred thousand Kalkars and a thousand Va-gas. In a thousand great ships they came bearing arms and ammunition and strange, new engines of destruction fashioned by the brilliant mind of the arch villain of the universe.

No one but Orthis could have done it. No one but Orthis would have done it. It had been he who had perfected the engines that had made the Barsoom possible. After he had become the dominant force among the Kalkars of the moon he had aroused their imaginations with tales of the great, rich world lying ready and unarmed within easy striking distance of them. It had been an easy thing to enlist their labor in the building of the ships and the manufacture of the countless accessories necessary to the successful accomplishment of the great adventure.

The moon furnished all the needed materials, the Kalkars furnished the labor and Orthis the knowledge, the brains and the leadership. Ten years had been devoted to the spreading of his propaganda and the winning over of the Thinkers, and then fourteen years were required to build and outfit the fleet.

Five days before they arrived astronomers detected the fleet as minute specks upon the eyepieces of their telescopes. There was much speculation, but it was Julian 5th alone who guessed the truth. He warned the governments at London and Washington, but though he was then in command of the International Peace Fleet his appeals were treated with levity and ridicule. He knew Orthis and so he knew that it was easily within the man's ability to construct a fleet, and he also knew that only for one purpose would Orthis return to Earth with so great a number of ships. It meant war, and the earth had nothing but a handful of cruisers wherewith to defend herself-there were not available in the

world twenty-five thousand organized fighting men, nor equipment for more than half again that number.

The inevitable occurred. Orthis seized London and Washington simultaneously. His well armed forces met with practically no resistance. There could be no resistance for there was nothing wherewith to resist. It was a criminal offense to possess firearms. Even edged weapons with blades over six inches long were barred by law. Military training, except for the chosen few of the International Peace Fleet, had been banned for years. And against this pitiable state of disarmament and unpreparedness was brought a force of a hundred thousand well armed, seasoned warriors with engines of destruction that were unknown to earth men. A description of one alone will suffice to explain the utter hopelessness of the cause of the earth men.

This instrument, of which the invaders brought but one, was mounted upon the deck of their flag ship and operated by Orthis in person. It was an invention of his own which no Kalkar understood or could operate. Briefly, it was a device for the generation of radio activity at any desired vibratory rate and for the directing of the resultant emanations upon any given object within its effective range. We do not know what Orthis called it, but the earth men of that day knew it was an electronic rifle.

It was quite evidently a recent invention and, therefore, in some respects crude, but be that as it may its effects were sufficiently deadly to permit Orthis to practically wipe out the entire International Peace Fleet in less than thirty days as rapidly as the various ships came within range of the electronic rifle. To the layman the visual effects induced by this weird weapon were appalling and nerve shattering. A mighty cruiser vibrant with life and power might fly majestically to engage the flagship of the Kalkars, when as by magic every aluminum part of the cruiser would vanish as mist before the sun, and as nearly ninety per cent of a peace fleet cruiser, including the hull, was constructed of aluminum, the result may be imagined-one moment there was a great ship forging through the air, her flags and pennants flying in the wind, her band playing, her officers and men at their quarters; the next a mass of engines, polished wood, cordage, flags and human beings hurtling earthward to extinction.

It was Julian 5th who discovered the secret of this deadly weapon and that it accomplished its destruction by projecting upon the ships of the Peace Fleet the vibratory rate of radio-activity identical with that of aluminum, with the result that, thus excited, the electrons of the attacked substance increased their own vibratory rate to a point that they became dissipated again into their elemental and invisible state-in other words aluminum was transmuted into something else that was as invisible and intangible as ether. Perhaps it was ether.

Assured of the correctness of his theory, Julian 5th withdrew in his own flagship to a remote part of the world, taking with him the few remaining cruisers of the fleet. Orthis searched for them for months, but it was not until the close

of the year 2050 that the two fleets met again and for the last time. Julian 5th had, by this time, perfected the plan for which he had gone into hiding, and he now faced the Kalkar fleet and his old enemy, Orthis, with some assurance of success. His flagship moved at the head of the short column that contained the remaining hope of a world and Julian 5th stood upon her deck beside a small and innocent looking box mounted upon a stout tripod.

Orthis moved to meet him-he would destroy the ships one by one as he approached them. He gloated at the easy victory that lay before him. He directed the electronic rifle at the flagship of his enemy and touched a button. Suddenly his brows knitted. What was this? He examined the rifle. He held a piece of aluminum before its muzzle and saw the metal disappear. The mechanism was operating, but the ships of the enemy did not disappear. Then he guessed the truth, for his own ship was now but a short distance from that of Julian 5th and he could see that the hull of the latter was entirely coated with a grayish substance that he sensed at once for what it was-an insulating material that rendered the aluminum parts of the enemy's fleet immune from the invisible fire of his rifle.

Orthis's scowl changed to a grim smile. He turned two dials upon a control box connected with the weapon and again pressed the button. Instantly the bronze propellers of the earth man's flagship vanished in thin air together with numerous fittings and parts above decks. Similarly went the exposed bronze parts of the balance of the International Peace Fleet, leaving a squadron of drifting derelicts at the mercy of the foe.

Julian 5th's flagship was at that time but a few fathoms from that of Orthis. The two men could plainly see each other's features. Orthis's expression was savage and gloating, that of Julian 5th sober and dignified.

"You thought to beat me, then!" jeered Orthis. "God, but I have waited and labored and sweated for this day. I have wrecked a world to best you, Julian 5th. To best you and to kill you, but to let you know first that I am going to kill you-to kill you in such a way as man was never before killed, as no other brain than mine could conceive of killing. You insulated your aluminum parts thinking thus to thwart me, but you did not know-your feeble intellect could not know-that as easily as I destroyed aluminum I can, by the simplest of adjustments, attune this weapon to destroy any one of a hundred different substances and among them human flesh or human bone.

"That is what I am going to do now, Julian 5th. First I am going to dissipate the bony structure of your frame. It will be done painlessly-it may not even result in instant death, and I am hoping that it will not. For I want you to know the power of a real intellect-the intellect from which you stole the fruits of its efforts for a lifetime; but not again, Julian 5th, for to-day you die-first your bones, then your flesh, and after you, your men and after them your spawn, the son that the woman I loved bore you; but she-she shall belong to me! Take that

memory to hell with you!" and he turned toward the dials beside his lethal weapon.

But Julian 5th placed a hand upon the little box resting upon the strong tripod before him, and he, it was, who touched a button before Orthis had touched his. Instantly the electronic rifle vanished beneath the very eyes of Orthis and at the same time the two ships touched and Julian 5th had leaped the rail to the enemy deck and was running toward his arch enemy.

Orthis stood gazing, horrified, at the spot where the greatest invention of his giant intellect had stood but an instant before, and then he looked up at Julian 5th approaching him and cried out horribly.

"Stop!" he screamed. "All our lives you have robbed me of the fruits of my efforts. Somehow you have stolen the secret of this, my greatest invention, and now you have destroyed it. May God in Heaven... ."

"Yes," cried Julian 5th, "and I am going to destroy you, unless you surrender to me with all your force."

"Never!" almost screamed the man, who seemed veritably demented, so hideous was his rage. "Never! This is the end, Julian 5th, for both of us," and even as he uttered the last word he threw a lever mounted upon a control board before him. There was a terrific explosion and both ships, bursting into flame, plunged meteorlike into the ocean beneath.

Thus went Julian 5th and Orthis to their deaths, carrying with them the secret of the terrible destructive force that the latter had brought with him from the moon; but the earth was already undone. It lay helpless before its conquerors. What the outcome might have been had Orthis lived can only remain conjecture. Possibly he would have brought order out of the chaos he had created and instituted a reign of reason. Earth men would at least have had the advantage of his wonderful intellect and his power to rule the ignorant Kalkars that he had transported from the moon.

There might even have been some hope had the earth men banded together against the common enemy, but this they did not do. Elements which had been discontented with this or that phase of government joined issues with the invaders. The lazy, the inefficient, the defective, who ever place the blame for their failures upon the shoulders of the successful, swarmed to the banners of the Kalkars, in whom they sensed kindred souls.

Political factions, labor and capital saw, or thought they saw, an opportunity for advantage to themselves in one way or another that was inimical to the interests of the others. The Kalkar fleets returned to the moon for more Kalkars until it was estimated that seven millions of them were being transported to earth each year.

Julian 6th, with Nah-ee-lah, his mother, lived, as did Or-tis, the son of Orthis and a Kalkar woman, but my story is not to be of them, but of Julian 9th, who was born just a century after the birth of Julian 5th.

Julian 9th will tell his own story.

CHAPTER II.

SOOR, THE TAX COLLECTOR

I WAS BORN in the Teivos of Chicago on January 1st, 2100, to Julian 8th and Elizabeth James. My father and mother were not married as marriages had long since become illegal. I was called Julian 9th. My parents were of the rapidly diminishing intellectual class and could both read and write. This learning they imparted to me, although it was very useless learning-it was their religion. Printing was a lost art and the last of the public libraries had been destroyed almost a hundred years before I reached maturity, so there was little or nothing to read, while to have a book in one's possession was to brand one as of the hated intellectuals, arousing the scorn and derision of the Kalkar rabble and the suspicion and persecution of the lunar authorities who ruled.

The first twenty years of my life were uneventful. As a boy I played among the crumbling ruins of what must once have been a magnificent city. Pillaged, looted and burned half a hundred times Chicago still reared the skeletons of some mighty edifices above the ashes of her former greatness. As a youth I regretted the departed romance of the long gone days of my fore-fathers when the earth men still retained sufficient strength to battle for existence. I deplored the quiet stagnation of my own time with only an occasional murder to break the monotony of our bleak existence, Even the Kalkar Guard stationed on the shore of the great lake seldom harassed us, unless there came an urgent call from higher authorities for an additional tax collection, for we fed them well and they had the pick of our women and young girls-almost, but not quite as you shall see.

The commander of the guard had been stationed here for years and we considered ourselves very fortunate in that he was too lazy and indolent to be cruel or oppressive. His tax collectors were always with us on market days; but they did not exact so much that we had nothing left for ourselves as refugees from Milwaukee told us was the case there.

I recall one poor devil from Milwaukee who staggered into our market place of a Saturday. He was nothing more than a bag of bones and he told us that fully ten thousand people had died of starvation the preceding month in his Teivos. The word Teivos is applied impartially to a district and to the administrative body that misadministers its affairs. No one knows what the word really means, though my mother has told me that her grandfather said that it came from another world, the moon, like Kash Guard, which also means nothing in particular-one soldier is a Kash Guard, ten thousand soldiers are a Kash Guard. If a man comes with a piece of paper upon which something is written that you are not supposed to be able to read and kills your grandmother or carries off your sister you say: "The Kash Guard did it."

That was one of the many inconsistencies of our form of government that aroused my indignation even in youth-I refer to the fact that the Twenty-Four is-

sued written proclamations and commands to a people it did not allow to learn to read and write, I said, I believe, that printing was a lost art. This is not quite true except as it refers to the mass of the people, for the Twenty-Four still maintained a printing department, where it issued money and manifestos. The money was used in lieu of taxation-that is when we had been so over-burdened by taxation that murmurings were heard even among the Kalkar class the authorities would send agents among us to buy our wares, paying us with money that had no value and which we could not use except to kindle our fires.

Taxes could not be paid in money as the Twenty-Four would only accept gold and silver, or produce and manufactures, and as all the gold and silver had disappeared from circulation while my father was in his teens we had to pay with what we raised or manufactured.

Three Saturdays a month the tax collectors were in the market places appraising our wares and on the last Saturday they collected one per cent of all-we had bought or sold during the month. Nothing had any fixed value-today you might haggle half an hour in trading a pint of beans for a goat skin and next week if you wanted beans the chances were more than excellent that you would have to give four or five goat skins for a pint, and the tax collectors took advantage of that-they appraised on the basis of the highest market values for the month.

My father had a few long haired goats-they were called Montana goats, but he said they really were Angoras, and mother used to make cloth from their fleece. With the cloth, the milk and the flesh from our goats we lived very well, having also a small vegetable garden beside our house; but there were some necessities that we must purchase in the market place. It was against the law to barter in private, as the tax collectors would then have known nothing about a man's income. Well, one winter my mother was ill and we were in sore need of coal to heat the room in which she lay, so father went to the commander of the Kash Guard and asked permission to purchase some coal before market day. A soldier was sent with him to Hoffmeyer, the agent of the Kalkar, Pthav, who had the coal concession for our district-the kalkers have everything-and when Hoffmeyer discovered how badly we needed coal he said that for five milk goats father could have half his weight in coal.

My father protested, but it was of no avail and as he knew how badly my mother needed heat he took the five goats to Hoffmeyer and brought back the coal. On the following market day he paid one goat for a sack of beans equal to his weight and when the tax collector came for his tithe he said to father: "You paid five goats for half your weight in beans, and as everyone knows that beans are worth twenty times as much as coal, the coal you bought must be worth one hundred goats by now, and as beans are worth twenty times as much as coal and you have twice as much beans as coal your beans are now worth two hundred goats, which makes

your trades for this month amount to three hundred goats. Bring me, therefore, three of your best goats."

He was a new tax collector-the old one would not have done such a thing; but it was about that time that everything began to change. Father said he would not have thought that things could be much worse; but he found out differently later. The change commenced in 2017, right after Jarth became Jemadar of the United Teivos of America. Of course, it did not all happen at once. Washington is a long way from Chicago and there is no continuous railroad between them. The Twenty-Four keeps up a few disconnected lines; but it is hard to operate them as there are no longer any trained mechanics to maintain them. It never takes less than a week to travel from Washington to Gary, the western terminus.

Father said that most of the railways were destroyed during the wars after the Kalkars overran the country and that as workmen were then permitted to labor only four hours a day, when they felt like it, and even then most of them were busy making new laws so much of the time that they had no chance to work, there was not enough labor to operate or maintain the roads that were left, but that was not the worst of it. Practically all the men who understood the technical details of operation and maintenance, of engineering and mechanics belonged to the more intelligent class of earthmen and were, consequently, immediately thrown out of employment and later killed.

For seventy-five years there had been no new locomotives built and but few repairs made on those in existence. The Twenty-Four had sought to delay the inevitable by operating a few trains only for their own requirements-for government officials and troops; but it could now be but a question of a short time before railroad operation must ceaseforever. It didn't mean much to me as I had never ridden on a train-never even seen one, in fact, other than the rusted remnants, twisted and tortured by fire, that lay scattered about various localities of our city; but father and mother considered it a calamity-the passing of the last link between the old civilization and the new barbarism.

Airships, automobiles, steamships, and even the telephone had gone before their time; but they had heard their fathers tell of these and other wonders. The telegraph was still in operation, though the service was poor and there were only a few lines between Chicago and the Atlantic seaboard. To the west of us was neither railroad nor telegraph. I saw a man when I was about ten years old who had come on horseback from a Teivos in Missouri. He started out with forty others to get in touch with the east and learn what had transpired there in the past fifty years; but between bandits and Kash Guards all had been killed but himself during the long and adventurous journey.

I shall never forget how I hung about picking up every scrap of the exciting narrative that fell from his lips nor how my imagination worked overtime for many weeks thereafter as I tried to picture myself the hero of similar adven-

tures in the mysterious and unknown west. He told us that conditions were pretty bad in all the country he had passed through; but that in the agricultural districts living was easier because the Kash Guard came less often and the people could gain a fair living from the land. He thought our conditions were worse than those in Missouri and he would not remain, preferring to face the dangers of the return trip rather than live so comparatively close to the seat of the Twenty-Four.

Father was very angry when he came home from market after the new tax collector had levied a tax of three goats on him. Mother was up again and the cold snap had departed leaving the mildness of spring in the late March air. The ice had gone off the river on the banks of which we lived and I was already looking forward to my first swim of the year. The goat skins were drawn back from the windows of our little home and the fresh, sun-laden air was blowing through our three rooms.

"Bad times are coming, Elizabeth," said father, after he had told her of the injustice. "They have been bad enough in the past; but now that the swine have put the king of swine in as Jemadar-"

"S-s-sh!" cautioned my mother, nodding her head toward the open window.

Father remained silent, listening. We heard footsteps passing around the house toward the front and a moment later the form of a man darkened the door. Father breathed a sigh of relief.

"Ah!" he exclaimed, "it is only our good brother Johansen. Come in, Brother Peter and tell us the news."

"And there is news enough," exclaimed the visitor. "The old commandant has been replaced by a new one, a fellow by the name of Or-tis-one of Jarth's cronies. What do you think of that?"

Brother Peter was standing between father and mother with his back toward the latter, so he did not see mother place her finger quickly to her lips in a sign to father to guard his speech. I saw a slight frown cross my father's brow, as though he resented my mother's warning; but when he spoke his words were such as those of our class have learned through suffering are the safest.

"It is not for me to think," he said, "or to question in any way what the Twenty-Four does."

"Nor for me," spoke Johansen quickly; "but among friends-a man cannot help but think and sometimes it is good to speak your mind-eh?"

Father shrugged his shoulders and turned away. I could see that he was boiling over with a desire to unburden himself of some of his loathing for the degraded beasts that Fate had placed in power nearly a century before. His childhood had still been close enough to the glorious past of his country's proudest days to have been impressed through the tales of his elders with a poignant realization of all that had been lost and of how it had been lost. This he and mother had tried to impart to me as others of the dying intellectuals attempted to nurse the spark of a waning culture in the breasts of their offspring

against that always hoped for, yet seemingly hopeless, day when the world should start to emerge from the slough of slime and ignorance into which the cruelties of the Kalkars had dragged it.

"Now, Brother Peter," said father, at last, "I must go and take my three goats to the tax collector, or he will charge me another one for a fine." I saw that he tried to speak naturally; but he could not keep the bitterness out of his voice.

Peter pricked up his ears. "Yes," he said, "I had heard of that piece of business. This new tax collector was laughing about it to Hoffmeyer. He thinks it a fine joke and Hoffmeyer says that now that you got the coal for so much less than it was worth he is going before the Twenty-Four and ask that you be compelled to pay him the other ninety-five goats that the tax collector says the coal is really worth."

"Oh!" exclaimed mother, "they would not really do such a wicked thing-I am sure they would not."

Peter shrugged. "Perhaps they only joked," he said; "these Kalkars are great jokers."

"Yes," said father, "they are great jokers; but some day I shall have my little joke," and he walked out toward the pens where the goats were kept when not on pasture.

Mother looked after him with a troubled light in her eyes and I saw her shoot a quick glance at Peter, who presently followed father from the house and went his way.

Father and I took the goats to the tax collector. He was a small man with a mass of red hair, a thin nose and two small, close-set eyes. His name was Soor. As soon as he saw father he commenced to fume.

"What is your name, man?" he demanded insolently.

"Julian 8th," replied father. "Here are the three goats in payment of my income tax for this month-shall I put them in the pen?"

"What did you say your name is?" snapped the fellow.

"Julian 8th," father repeated.

"Julian 8th!" shouted Soor. "Julian 8th!" I suppose you are too fine a gentleman to be brother to such as me, eh?"

"Brother Julian 8th," said father sullenly.

"Go put your goats in the pen and hereafter remember that all men are brothers who are good citizens and loyal to our great Jemadar."

When father had put the goats away we started for home; but as we were passing Soor he shouted: "Well?"

Father turned a questioning look toward him.

"Well?" repeated the man.

"I do not understand," said father; "have I not done all that the law requires?"

"What's the matter with you pigs out here?" Soor fairly screamed. "Back in the eastern Teivos a tax collector doesn't have to starve to death on his miserable pay-his people bring him little presents."

"Very well," said father quietly, "I will bring you something next time I

come to market."

"See that you do," snapped Soor.

Father did not speak all the way home, nor did he say a word until after we had finished our dinner of cheese, goat's milk and corn cakes. I was so angry that I could scarce contain myself; but I had been brought up in an atmosphere of repression and terrorism that early taught me to keep a still tongue in my head.

When father had finished his meal he rose suddenly- so suddenly that his chair flew across the room to the opposite wall-and squaring his shoulders he struck his chest a terrible blow.

"Coward! Dog!" he cried. "My God! I cannot stand it. I shall go mad if I must submit longer to such humiliation. I am no longer a man. There are no men! We are worms that the swine grind into the earth with their polluted hoofs. And I dared say nothing. I stood there while that offspring of generations of menials and servants insulted me and spat upon me and I dared say nothing but meekly to propitiate him. It is disgusting.

"In a few generations they have sapped the manhood from American men. My ancestors fought at Bunker Hill, at Gettysburg, at San Juan, at Chateau Thierry. And I? I bend the knee to every degraded creature that wears the authority of the beasts at Washington-and not one of them is an American-scarce one of them an earth man. To the scum of the moon I bow my head-I who am one of the few survivors of the most powerful people the world ever knew."

"Julian!" cried my mother, "be careful, dear. Some one may be listening." I could see her tremble.

"And you are an American woman!" he growled.

"Julian, don't!" she pleaded. "It is not on my account-you know that it is not-but for you and our boy. I do not care what becomes of me; but I cannot see you torn from us as we have seen others taken from their families, who dared speak their minds."

"I know, dear heart," he said after a brief silence. "I know-it is the way with each of us. I dare not on your account and Julian's, you dare not on ours, and so it goes. Ah, if there were only more of us. If I could but find a thousand men who dared!"

"S-s-sh!" cautioned mother. "There are so many spies. One never knows. That is why I cautioned you when Brother Peter was here to-day. One never knows."

"You suspect Peter?" asked father.

"I know nothing," replied mother; "I am afraid of every one. It is a frightful existence and though I have lived it thus all my life, and my mother before me and her mother before that, I never became hardened to it."

"The American spirit has been bent but not broken," said father. "Let us hope that it will never break."

"If we have the hearts to suffer always it will not break," said mother, "but it is hard, so hard-when one even hates to bring a child into the world," and she glanced at me, "because of the misery and suffering to which it is doomed for life. I yearned for children, always; but

I feared to have them-mostly I feared that they might be girls. To be a girl in this world to-day-Oh, it is frightful!"

After supper father and I went out and milked the goats and saw that the sheds were secured for the night against the dogs. It seemed as though they became more numerous and more bold each year. They ran in packs where there were only individuals when I was a little boy and it was scarce safe for a grown man to travel an unfrequented locality at night. We were not permitted to have firearms in our possession, nor even bows and arrows, so we could not exterminate them and they seem to realize our weakness, coming close in among the houses and pens at night.

They were large brutes-fearless and powerful. There was one pack more formidable than the others which father said appeared to carry a strong strain of collie and airedale blood-the members of this pack were large, cunning and ferocious and were becoming a terror to the city-we called them the Hellhounds.

CHAPTER III.

THE HELLHOUNDS

AFTER WE returned to the house with the milk Jim Thompson and his woman, Mollie Sheehan, came over. They lived up the river about half a mile, on the next farm, and were our best friends. They were the only people that father and mother really trusted, so when we were all together alone we spoke our minds very freely. It seemed strange to me, even as a boy, that such, big strong men as father and Jim should be afraid to express their real views to any one, and though I was born and reared in an atmosphere of suspicion and terror I could never quite reconcile myself to the attitude of servility and cowardice which marked us all.

And yet I knew that my father was no coward. He was a fine-looking man, too-tall and wonderfully muscled-and I have seen him fight with men and with dogs and once he defended mother against a Kash Guard and with his bare hands he killed the armed soldier. He lies in the center of the goat pen now, his rifle, bayonet and ammunition wrapped in many thicknesses of oiled cloth beside him. We left no trace and were never even suspected; but we know where there is a rifle, a bayonet and ammunition.

Jim had had trouble with Soor, the new tax collector, too, and was very angry. Jim was a big man and, like father, was always smooth shaven as were nearly all Americans, as we called those whose people had lived here long before the Great War. The others-the true Kalkars-grew no beards. Their ancestors had come from the moon many years before. They had come in strange ships year after year, but finally, one by one, their ships had been lost and as none of them knew how to build others or the engines that operated them the time came when no more Kalkars could come from the moon to earth.

That was good for us, but it came too late, for the Kalkars already here bred like flies in a shady stable. The pure Kalkars were the worst, but there were millions of half-breeds and they were

bad, too, and I think they really hated us pure bred earth men worse than the true Kalkars, or moon men, did.

Jim was terribly mad. He said that he couldn't stand it much longer-that he would rather be dead than live in such an awful world; but I was accustomed to such talk-I had heard it since infancy. Life was a hard thing-just work, work, work, for a scant existence over and above the income tax. No pleasures-few conveniences or comforts; absolutely no luxuries-and, worst of all, no hope. It was seldom that any one smiled-any one in our class-and the grown-ups never laughed. As children we laughed-a little; not much. It is hard to kill the spirit of childhood; but the brotherhood of man had almost done it.

"It's your own fault, Jim," said father. He was always blaming our troubles on Jim, for Jim's people had been American workmen before the Great War-mechanics and skilled artisans in various trades. "Your people never took a stand against the invaders. They flirted with the new theory of brotherhood the Kalkars brought with them from the moon.

They listened to the emissaries of the malcontents and, afterward, when Kalkars sent their disciples among us they 'first endured, then pitied, then embraced.' They had the numbers and the power to combat successfully the wave of insanity that started with the lunar catastrophe and overran the world-they could have kept it out of America; but they didn't-instead they listened to false prophets and placed their great strength in the hands of the corrupt leaders."

"And how about your class?" countered Jim, "too rich and lazy and indifferent even to vote. They tried to grind us down while they waxed fat off of our labor."

"The ancient sophistry!" snapped father. "There was never a more prosperous or independent class of human beings in the world than the American laboring man of the twentieth century."

"You talk about us! We were the first to fight it-my people fought and bled and died to keep Old Glory above the capitol at Washington; but we were too few and now the Kash flag of the Kalkars floats in its place and for nearly a century it had been a crime punishable by death to have the Stars and Stripes in your possession."

He walked quickly across the room to the fireplace and removed a stone above the rough, wooden mantel. Reaching his hand into the aperture behind he turned toward us.

"But cowed and degraded as I have become," he cried. "thank God I still have a spark of manhood left-I have had the strength to defy them as my fathers defied them-I have kept this that has been handed down to me-kept it for my son to hand down to his son-and I have taught him to die for it as his forefathers died for it and as I would die for it, gladly."

He drew forth a small bundle of fabric and holding the upper corners between the fingers of his two hands he let it unfold before us-an oblong cloth of alternate red and white striped with a blue

square in one corner, upon which were sewn many little white stars.

Jim and Mollie and mother rose to their feet and I saw mother cast an apprehensive glance toward the doorway. For a moment they stood thus in silence, looking with wide eyes upon the thing that father held and then Jim walked slowly toward it and, kneeling, took the edge of it in his great, horny fingers and pressed it to his lips and the candle upon the rough table, sputtering in the spring wind that waved the the goat skin at the window, cast its feeble rays upon them.

"It is the Flag, my son," said father to me. "It is Old Glory-the flag of your fathers-the flag that made the world a decent place to live in. It is death to possess it; but when I am gone take it and guard it as our family has guarded it since the regiment that carried it came back from the Argonne."

I felt tears filling my eyes-why, I could not have told them-and I turned away to hide them-turned toward the window and there, beyond the waving goat skin, I saw a face in the outer darkness. I have always been quick of thought and of action; but I never thought or moved more quickly in my life than I did in the instant following my discovery of the face in the window. With a single movement I swept the candle from the table, plunging the room into utter darkness, and leaping to my father's side I tore the Flag from his hands and thrust it back into the aperture above the mantel. The stone lay upon the mantel itself, nor did it take me but a moment to grope for it and find it in the dark-an instant more and it was replaced in its niche.

So ingrained were apprehension and suspicion in the human mind that the four in the room with me sensed intuitively something of the cause of my act and when I had hunted for the candle, found it and relighted it they were standing, tense and motionless where I had last seen them. They did not ask me a question. Father was the first to speak.

"You were very careless and clumsy, Julian," he said. "If you wanted the candle why did you not pick it up carefully instead of rushing at it so? But that is always your way-you are constantly knocking things over."

He raised his voice a trifle as he spoke; but it was a lame attempt at deception and he knew it, as did we. If the man who owned the face in the dark heard his words he must have known it as well.

As soon as I had relighted the candle I went into the kitchen and out the back door and then, keeping close in the black shadow of the house, I crept around toward the front, for I wanted to learn, if I could, who it was who had looked in upon that scene of high treason. The night was moonless but clear, and I could see quite a distance in every direction, as our house stood in a fair size clearing close to the river. Southeast of us the path wound upward across the approach to an ancient bridge, long since destroyed by raging mobs or rotting away-I do not know which-and presently I saw the figure of a man silhouetted against the starlit sky as he

topped the approach. The man carried a laden sack upon his back. This fact was, to some extent, reassuring as it suggested that the eavesdropper was himself upon some illegal mission and that he could ill afford to be too particular of the actions of others. I have seen many men carrying sacks and bundles at night-I have carried them myself. It is the only way, often, in which a man may save enough from the tax collector on which to live and support his family.

This nocturnal traffic is common enough and under our old tax collector and the indolent commandant of former times not so hazardous as it might seem when one realizes that it is punishable by imprisonment for ten years at hard labor in the coal mines and, in aggravated cases, by death. The aggravated cases are those in which a man is discovered trading something by night that the tax collector or the commandant had wanted for himself.

I did not follow the man, being sure that he was one of our own class, but turned back toward the house where I found the four talking in low whispers, nor did any of us raise his voice again that evening.

Father and Jim were talking, as they usually did, of the West. They seemed to feel that somewhere, far away toward the setting sun, there must be a little corner of America where men could live in peace and freedom-where there were no Kash Guards, tax collectors or Kalkars.

It must have been three quarters of an hour later, as Jim and Mollie were preparing to leave, that there came a knock upon the door which immediately swung open before an invitation to enter could be given. We looked up to see Peter Johansen smiling at us. I never liked Peter. He was a long, lanky man who smiled with his mouth; but never with his eyes. I didn't like the way he used to look at mother when he thought no one was observing him, nor his habit of changing women every year or two-that was too much like the Kalkars. I always felt toward Peter as I had as a child when, barefooted, I stepped unknowingly upon a snake in the deep grass.

Father greeted the newcomer with a pleasant "Welcome, Brother Johansen;" but Jim only nodded his head and scowled, for Peter had a habit of looking at Mollie as he did at mother, and both women were beautiful. I think I never saw a more beautiful woman than my mother and as I grew older and learned more of men and the world I marveled that father had been able to keep her and, too, I understood why she never went abroad; but stayed always closely about the house and farm. I never knew her to go to the market place as did most of the other women. But I was twenty now and worldly wise.

"What brings you out so late, Brother Johansen?" I asked. We always used the prescribed "Brother" to those of whom we were not sure. I hate the word-to me a brother meant an enemy as it did to all our class and I guess to every class-even the Kalkars.

"I followed a stray pig," replied Peter to my question. "He went in that direction," and he waved a hand toward

the market place. As he did so something tumbled from beneath his coat-something that his arm had held there. It was an empty sack. Immediately I knew who it was owned the face in the dark beyond our goatskin hanging. Peter snatched the sack from the floor in ill-concealed confusion and then I saw the expression of his cunning face change as he held it toward father.

"Is this yours, Brother Julian?" he asked. "I found it just before your door and thought that I would stop and ask."

"No," said I, not waiting for father to speak, "it is not ours-it must belong to the man whom I saw carrying it, full, a short time since. He went by the path beside the old bridge." I looked straight into Peter's eyes. He flushed and then went white.

"I did not see him," he said presently; "but if the sack is not yours I will keep it-at least it is not high treason to have it in any possession." Then, without another word, he turned and left the house.

We all knew then that Peter had seen the episode of the flag. Father said that we need not fear, that Peter was all right; but Jim thought differently and so did Mollie and mother, I agreed with them. I did not like Peter. Jim and Mollie went home shortly after Peter left and we prepared for bed. Mother and Father occupied the one bedroom. I slept on some goat skins in the big room we called the living room. The other room was a kitchen. We ate there also.

Mother had always made me take off my clothes and put on a mohair garment for sleeping. The other young mere I knew slept in the same clothes they wore during the day; but mother was particular about this and insisted that I have my sleeping garments and also that I bathed often once a week in the winter. In the summer I was in the river so much that I had a bath once or twice a day. Father was also particular about his personal cleanliness. The Kalkars were very different.

My underclothing was of fine mohair, in winter. In summer I wore none: I had a heavy mohair shirt and breeches, tight at waist and knees and baggy between, a goatskin tunic and boots of goatskin. I do not know what we would have done without the goats-they furnished us food and raiment. The boots were loose and fastened just above the calf of the leg with a strap-to keep them from falling down. I wore nothing on my head, summer or winter; but my hair was heavy. I wore it brushed straight back, always, and cut off square behind just below my ears. To keep it from getting in my eyes I always tied a goatskin thong about my head.

I had just slipped off my tunic when I heard the baying of the Hellhounds close by. I thought they might be getting into the goat pen, so I waited a moment, listening and then I heard a scream-the scream of a woman in terror. It sounded down by the river near the goat pens, and mingled with it was the vicious growling and barking of the Hellhounds. I did not wait to listen longer, but seized my knife and a long staff. We were permitted to have no edged weapon with a blade over six

inches long. Such as it was, it was the best weapon I had and much better than none.

I ran out the front door, which was closest, and turned toward the pens in the direction of the Hellhounds' deep growling and the screams of the woman.

As I neared the pens and my eyes became accustomed to the outer darkness I made out what appeared to be a human figure resting partially upon the top of one of the sheds that formed a portion of the pen wall. The legs and lower body dangled over the edge of the roof and I could see three or four Hellhounds leaping for it, while another, that had evidently gotten a hold, was hanging to one leg and attempting to drag the figure down.

As I ran forward I shouted at the beasts and those that were leaping for the figure stopped and turned toward me. I knew something of the temper of these animals and that I might expect them to charge, for they were quite fearless of man ordinarily; but I ran forward toward them so swiftly and with such determination that they turned growling and ran off.

The one that had hold of the figure succeeded in dragging it to earth just before I reached them and then it discovered me and turned, standing over its prey, with wide jaws and terrific fangs menacing me. It was a huge beast, almost as large as a full grown goat, and easily a match for several men as poorly armed as I. Under ordinary circumstances I should have given it plenty of room; but what was I to do when the life of a woman was at stake?

I was an American, not a Kalkar-those swine would throw a woman to the Hellhounds to save their own skins-and I had been brought up to revere woman in a world that considered her on a par with the cow, the nanny and the sow, only less valuable since the latter were not the common property of the state.

I knew then that death stood very near as I faced that frightful beast and from the corner of an eye I could see its mates creeping closer. There was no time to think, even, and so I rushed in upon the Hellhound with my staff and blade. As I did so I saw the wide and terrified eyes of a young girl looking up at me from beneath the beast of prey. I had not thought to desert her to her fate before; but after that single glance I could not have done so had a thousand deaths confronted me.

As I was almost upon the beast it sprang for my throat, rising high upon its hind feet and leaping straight as an arrow. My staff was useless and so I dropped it, meeting the charge with my knife and a bare hand. By luck the fingers of my left hand found the creature's throat at the first clutch; but the impact of his body against mine hurled me to the ground beneath him and there, growling and struggling, he sought to close those snapping fangs upon me. Holding his jaws at arm's length I struck at his breast with my blade, nor did I miss him once. The pain of the wounds turned him crazy and yet, to my utter surprise found I still could hold him and not that alone; but that I could also struggle to my knees and then to my

feet-still holding him at arm's length in my left hand.

I had always known that I was muscular; but until that moment I had never dreamed of the great strength that Nature had given me, for never before had I had occasion to exert the full measure of my powerful thews. It was like a revelation from above and of a sudden I found myself smiling and in the instant a miracle occurred-all fear of these hideous beasts dissolved from my brain like thin air and with it fear of man as well. I, who had been brought out of a womb of fear into a world of terror, who had been suckled and nurtured upon apprehension and timidity-I, Julian 9th, at the age of twenty years, became in the fraction of a second utterly fearless of man or beast. It was the knowledge of my great power that did it-that and, perhaps, those two liquid eyes that I knew to be watching me.

The other hounds were closing in upon me when the creature in my grasp went suddenly limp. My blade must have found its heart. And then the others charged and I saw the girl upon her feet beside me, my staff in her hands, ready to battle with them.

"To the roof!" I shouted to her; but she did not heed. Instead she stood her ground, striking a vicious blow at the leader as he came within range.

Swinging the dead beast above my head I hurled the carcass at the others so that they scattered and retreated again and then I turned to the girl and without more parley lifted her in my arms and tossed her lightly to the roof of the goat shed. I could easily have followed to her side and safety had not something filled my brain with an effect similar to that which I imagined must be produced by the vile concoction brewed by the Kalkars and which they drank to excess, while it would have meant imprisonment for us to be apprehended with it in our possession. At least, I know that I felt a sudden exhilaration-a strange desire to accomplish wonders before the eyes of this stranger, and so I turned upon the four remaining hellhounds who had now bunched to renew the attack and without waiting for them I rushed toward them.

They did not flee; but stood their ground, growling hideously, their hair bristling upon their necks and along their spines, their great fangs bared and slavering; but among them I tore and by the very impetuosity of my attack I overthrew them. The first sprang to meet me and him I seized by the neck and clamping his body between my knees I twisted his head entirely around, until I heard the vertebrae snap. The other three were upon me then, leaping and tearing; but I felt no fear. One by one I took them in my mighty hands and lifting them high above my head hurled them violently from me. Two only returned to the attack and these I vanquished with my bare hands disdaining to use my blade upon such carrion.

It was then that I saw a man running toward me from up the river and another from our house. The first was Jim, who had heard commotion and the girl's screams and the other was my father.

Both had seen the last part of the battle and neither could believe that it was I, Julian, who had done this thing. Father was very proud of me and Jim was, too, for he had always said that having no son of his own father must share me with him.

And then I turned toward the girl who had slipped from the roof and was approaching us. She moved with the same graceful dignity that was mother's-not at all like the clumsy clods that belonged to the Kalkars, and she came straight to me and laid a hand upon my arm.

"Thank, you!" she said; "and God bless you. Only a very brave and powerful man could have done what you have done."

And then, all of a sudden, I did not feel brave at all; but very weak and silly, for all I could do was finger my blade and look at the ground. It was father who spoke and the interruption helped to dispel my embarrassment.

"Who are you?" he asked, "and from where do you come? It is strange to find a young woman wandering about alone at night; but stranger still to hear one who dares invoke the forbidden deity."

I had not realized until then that she had used His name; but when I did recall it, I could not but glance apprehensively about to see if any others might be around who could have heard. Father and Jim I knew to be safe; for there was a common tie between our families that lay in the secret religious rites we held once each week. Since that hideous day that had befallen even before my father's birth-that day, which none dared mention above a whisper, when the clergy of every denomination, to the last man, had been murdered by order of the Twenty-Four, it had been a capital crime to worship God in any form whatsoever.

Some madman at Washington, filled, doubtless, with the fumes of the awful drink that made them more bestial even than Nature designed them, issued the frightful order on the ground that the church was attempting to usurp the functions of the state and that also the clergy were inciting the people to rebellion-nor do I doubt but that the latter was true. Too bad, indeed, that they were not given more time to bring their divine plan to fruition.

We took the girl to the house and when my mother saw her and how young and beautiful she was and took her in her arms, the child broke down and sobbed and clung to mother, nor could either speak for some time. In the light of the candle I saw that the stranger was of wondrous beauty. I have said that my mother was the most beautiful woman I had ever seen, and such is the truth; but this girl who had come so suddenly among us was the most beautiful girl.

She was about nineteen, delicately molded and yet without weakness. There were strength and vitality apparent in every move she made as well as in the expression of her face, her gestures and her manner of speech. She was girlish and at the same time filled one with an impression of great reserve strength of mind and character. She was

very brown, showing exposure to the sun, yet her skin was clear-almost translucent.

Her garb was similar to mine-the common attire of people of our class, both men and women. She wore the tunic and breeches and boots just as mother and Mollie and the rest of us did; but somehow there was a difference-I had never before realized what a really beautiful costume it was. The band about her forehead was wider than was generally worn and upon it were sewn numerous tiny shells, set close together and forming a pattern. It was her only attempt at ornamentation; but even so it was quite noticeable in a world where women strove to make themselves plain rather than beautiful-some going even so far as to permanently disfigure their faces and those of their female offspring, while others, many, many others, killed the latter in infancy. Mollie had done so with two. No wonder that grown-ups never laughed and seldom smiled!

When the girl had quieted her sobs on mother's breast father renewed his questioning; but mother said to wait until morning, that the girl was tired and unstrung and needed sleep. Then came the question of where she was to sleep. Father said that he would sleep in the living room with me and that the stranger could sleep with mother; but Jim suggested that she come home with him as he and Mollie had three rooms, as did we, and no one to occupy his living room. And so it was arranged, although I would rather have had her remain with us.

At first she rather shrank from going, until mother told her that Jim and Mollie were good, kind-hearted people and that she would be as safe with them as with her own father and mother. At mention of her parents the tears came to her eyes and she turned impulsively toward my mother and kissed her, after which she told Jim that she was ready to accompany him.

She started to say good-by to me and to thank me again; but, having found my tongue at last, I told her that I would go with them as far as Jim's house. This appeared to please her and so we set forth. Jim walked ahead and I followed with the girl and on the way I discovered a very strange thing. Father had shown me a piece of iron once that pulled smaller bits of iron to it. He said that it was a magnet.

This slender, stranger girl was certainly no piece of iron, nor was I a smaller bit of anything; but nevertheless I could not keep away from her. I cannot explain it-however wide the way was I was always drawn over close to her, so that our arms touched and once our hands swung together and the strangest and most delicious thrill ran through me that I had ever experienced.

I used to think that Jim's house was a long way from ours-when I had to carry things over there as a boy; but that night it was far too close-just a step or two and we were there.

Mollie heard us coming and was at the door, full of questionings, and when she saw the girl and heard a part of our story she reached out and took the girl to her bosom, just as mother had. Be-

fore they took her in the stranger turned and held out her hand to me.

"Good night!" she said, "and thank you again, and, once more, may God, our Father, bless and preserve you."

And I heard Mollie murmur: "The Saints be praised!" and then they went in and the door closed and I turned homeward, treading on air.

CHAPTER IV.

BROTHER GENERAL OR-TIS

THE NEXT day I set out as usual to peddle goat's milk. We were permitted to trade in perishable things on other than market days, though we had to make a strict accounting of all such bartering. I usually left Mollie until the last as Jim had a deep, cold well on his place where I liked to quench my thirst after my morning trip; but that day Mollie got her milk fresh and first and early-about half an hour earlier than I was wont to start out.

When I knocked and she bid me enter she looked surprised at first, for just an instant, and then a strange expression came into her eyes-half amusement, half pity-and she rose and went into the kitchen for the milk jar. I saw her wipe the corners of her eyes with the back of one finger; but I did not understand why-not then.

The stranger girl had been in the kitchen helping Mollie and the latter must have told her I was there, for she came right in and greeted me. It was the first good look I had had of her, for candle light is not brilliant at best. If I had been enthralled the evening before there is no word in my limited vocabulary to express the effect she had on me by daylight. She-but it is useless. I cannot describe her!

It took Mollie a long time to find the milk jar-bless her!-though it seemed short enough to me, and while she was finding it the stranger girl and I were getting acquainted. First she asked after father and mother and then she asked our names. When I told her mine she repeated it several times. "Julian 9th," she said; "Julian 9th!" and then she smiled up at me. "It is a nice name, I like it."

"And what is your name?" I asked.

"Juana," she said-she pronounced it Whanna; "Juana St. John."

"I am glad," I said, "that you like my name; but I like yours better." It was a very foolish speech and it made me feel silly; but she did not seem to think it foolish, or if she did she was too nice to let me know it. I have known many girls; but mostly they were homely and stupid. The pretty girls were seldom allowed in the market place-that is, the pretty girls of our class. The Kalkars permitted their girls to go abroad, for they did not care who got them, as long as some one got them; but American fathers and mothers would rather slay their girls than send them to the market place, and the former often was done. The Kalkar girls, even those born of American mothers, were coarse and brutal in appearance-low-browed, vulgar, bovine. No stock can be improved, or even kept to its normal plane, unless high grade males are used.

This girl was so entirely different-

from any other that I had ever seen that I marvelled that such a glorious creature could exist. I wanted to know all about her. It seemed to me that in some way I had been robbed of my right for many years that she should have lived and breathed and talked and gone her way without my ever knowing it, or her. I wanted to make up for lost time and so I asked her many questions.

She told me that she had been born and raised in the Teivos just west of Chicago, which extended along the Desplaines River and embraced a considerable area of unpopulated country and scattered farms.

"My father's home is in a district called Oak Park," she said, "and our house was one of the few that remained from ancient times. It was of solid concrete and stood upon the corner of two roads-once it must have been a very beautiful place, and even time and war have been unable entirely to erase its charm. Three great poplar trees rose to the north of it beside the ruins of what my father said was once a place where motor cars were kept by the long dead owner. To the south of the house were many roses, growing wild and luxuriant, while the concrete walls, from which the plaster had fallen in great patches, were almost entirely concealed by the clinging ivy that reached to the very eaves. "It was my home and so I loved it; but now it is lost to me forever. The Kash Guard and the tax collector came seldom-we were too far from the station and the market place, which lay southwest of us, on Salt Creek. But recently the new Jemadar, Jarth, appointed another commandant and a new tax collector. They did not like the station at Salt Creek and so they sought for a better location and after inspecting the district they chose Oak Park, and my father's home being the most comfortable and substantial, they ordered him to sell it to the Twenty-Four.

"You know what that means. They appraised it at a high figure-fifty thousand dollars it was, and paid him in paper money. There was nothing to do and so we prepared to move. Whenever they had come to look at the house my mother had hidden me in a little cubbyhole on the landing between the second and third floors, placing a pile of rubbish in front of me, but the day that we were leaving to take a place on the banks of the Desplaines, where father thought that we might live without being disturbed, the new commandant came unexpectedly and saw me.

"How old is the girl?" he asked my mother.

"Fifteen," she replied sullenly.

" 'You lie, you sow!' he cried angrily; 'she is eighteen if she is a day!'

"Father was standing there beside us and when the commandant spoke as he did to mother I saw father go very white and then, without a word, he hurled himself upon the swine and before the Kash Guard who accompanied him could prevent, father had almost killed the commandant with his bare hands.

"You know what happened-I do not need to tell you. They killed my father before my eyes. Then the commandant

offered my mother to one of the Kash Guard, but she snatched his bayonet from his belt and ran it through her heart before they could prevent her. I tried to follow her example, but they seized me.

"I was carried to my own bedroom on the second floor of my father's house and locked there. The commandant said that he would come and see me in the evening and that everything would be all right with me. I knew what he meant and I made up my mind that he would find me dead.

"My heart was breaking for the loss of my father and mother, and yet the desire to live was strong within me. I did not want to die-something urged me to live, and in addition there was the teaching of my father and mother. They were both from Quaker stock and very religious. They educated me to fear God and to do no wrong by thought or violence to another, and yet I had seen my father attempt to kill a man, and I had seen my mother slay herself. My world was all upset. I was almost crazed by grief and fear and uncertainty as to what was right for me to do.

"And then darkness came and I heard someone ascending the stairway. The windows of the second story are too far from the ground for one to risk a leap; but the ivy is old and strong. The commandant was not sufficiently familiar with the place to have taken the ivy into consideration and before the footsteps reached my door I had swung out of the window and, clinging to the ivy, made my way to the ground down the rough and strong old stem.

"That was three days ago. I hid and wandered-I did not know in what direction I went. Once an old woman took me in overnight and fed me and gave me food to carry for the next day. I think that I must have been almost mad, for mostly the happenings of the past three days are only indistinct and jumbled fragments of memory in my mind. And then the hellhounds! Oh, how frightened I was! And then-you!"

I don't know what there was about the way she said it; but it seemed to me as though it meant a great deal more than she knew herself. Almost like a prayer of thanksgiving, it was, that she had at last found a safe haven of refuge-safe and permanent. Anyway, I liked the idea.

And then Mollie came in, and as I was leaving she asked me if I would come that evening, and Juana cried: "Oh, yes, do!" and I said that I would.

When I had finished delivering the goats' milk I started for home, and on the way I met old Moses Samuels, the Jew. He made his living, and a scant one it was, by tanning hides. He was a most excellent tanner, but as nearly every one else knew how to tan there was not many customers; but some of the Kalkars used to bring him hides to tan. They knew nothing of how to do any useful thing, for they were descended from a long line of the most ignorant and illiterate people in the moon and the moment they obtained a little power they would not even work at what small trades their fathers once had learned, so that after a generation or two they were able to live only off the labor of

others. They created nothing, they produced nothing, they became the most burdensome class of parasites the world ever has endured.

The rich nonproducers of olden times were a blessing to the world by comparison with these, for the former at least had intelligence and imagination-they could direct others and they could transmit to their offspring the qualities of mind that are essential to any culture, progress or happiness that the world ever may hope to attain.

So the Kalkars patronized Samuels for their tanned hides, and if they had paid him for them the old Jew would have waxed rich; but they either did not pay him at all or else mostly in paper money. That did not even burn well, as Samuels used to say.

"Good morning, Julian," he called as we met. "I shall be needing some hides soon, for the new commander of the Kash Guard has heard of old Samuels and has sent for me and ordered five hides tanned the finest that can be. Have you seen this Or-tis, Julian?" He lowered his voice.

I shook my head negatively.

"Heaven help us!" whispered the old man. "Heaven help us!"

"Is he as bad as that, Moses?" I asked.

The old man wrung his hands. "Bad times are ahead, my son," he said. "Old Samuels knows his kind. He is not lazy like the last one and he is more cruel and more lustful; but about the hides. I have not paid you for the last-they paid me in paper money; but that I would not offer to a friend in payment for a last year's bird's nest. May be that I shall not be able to pay you for these new hides for a long time it depends upon how Or-tis pays me. Sometimes they are liberal-as they can afford to be with the property of others; but if he is a half-breed, as I hear he is, he will bate a Jew, and I shall get nothing. However, if he is pure Kalkar it may be different-the pure Kalkars do not hate a Jew more than they hate other Earthmen, though there is one Jew who hates a Kalkar."

That night we had our first introduction to Or-tis. He came in person; but I will tell how it all happened. After supper I went over to Jim's. Juana was standing in the little doorway as I came up the path. She looked rested now and almost happy. The hunted expression had left her eyes and she smiled as I approached. It was almost dusk, for the spring evenings were still short; but the air was balmy, and so we stood on the outside talking.

I recited the little gossip of our district that I had picked up during my day's work-the Twenty-Four had raised the local tax on farm products-Andrew Wright's woman had given birth to twins, a boy and a girl; but the girl had died; no need of comment here as most girl babies die-Soor had said that he would tax this district until we all died of starvation-pleasant fellow, Soor-one of the Kash Guard had taken Nellie Levy-Hoffmeyer had said that next winter we would have to pay more for coal-Dennis Corrigan had been sent to the mines for ten years because he had been caught trading at night. It was all alike,

this gossip of ours-all sordid, or sad, or tragic; but then life was a tragedy with us.

"How stupid of them to raise the tax on farm products," remarked Juana; "their fathers stamped out manufactures and commerce and now they will stamp out what little agriculture is left."

"The sooner they do it the better it will be for the world," I replied. "When they have starved all the farmers to death they themselves will starve."

And then, suddenly, she reverted to Dennis Corrigan. "It would have been kinder to have killed him," she said.

"That is why they did not do so," I replied.

"Do you ever trade at night?" she asked, and then before I could reply: "Do not tell me. I should not have asked; but I hope that you do not-it is so dangerous; nearly always are they caught."

I laughed. "Not nearly always," I said, "or most of us would have been in the mines long since. We could not live otherwise. The accursed income tax is unfair-it has always been unfair, for it falls hardest on those least able to support it."

"But the mines are so terrible!" she exclaimed, shuddering.

"Yes," I replied, "the mines are terrible. I would rather die than go there."

After a while I took Juana over to our house to see my mother. She liked the house very much. My father's father built it with his own hands. It is constructed of stone taken from the ruins of the old city-stone and brick. Father says that he thinks the bricks are from an old pavement, as we still see patches of these ancient bricks in various localities. Nearly all our houses are of this construction, for timber is scarce. The foundation walls and above the ground for about three feet are of rough stones of various sizes and above this are the bricks. The stones are laid so that some project farther than others and the effect is odd and rather nice. The eaves are low and over-hanging and the roof is thatched. It is a nice house and mother keeps it scrupulously clean within.

We had been talking for perhaps an hour, sitting in our living room-father, mother, Juana, and I-when the door was suddenly thrust open without warning and we looked up to see a man in the uniform of a Kash Guard confronting us. Behind him were others. We all rose and stood in silence. Two entered and took posts on either side of the doorway and then a third came in-a tall, dark man in the uniform of a commander, and we knew at once that it was Or-tis. At his heels were six more.

Or-tis looked at each of us and then, singling out father, he said: "You are Brother Julian 8th."

Father nodded. Or-tis eyed him for a moment and then his gaze wandered to mother and Juana, and I saw a new expression lessen the fierce scowl that had clouded his face from the moment of his entry. He was a large man; but not of the heavy type which is most common among his class. His nose was thin and rather fine, his eyes cold, gray, and piercing. He was very different from the fat swine that had preceded him-very different and more dangerous; even I

could see that. I could see a thin, cruel upper lip and a full and sensuous lower. If the other had been a pig this one was a wolf and he had the nervous restlessness of the wolf-and the vitality to carry out any wolfish designs he might entertain.

This visit to our home was typical of the man. The former commander had never accompanied his men on any excursion of the sort; but the teivos was to see much of Or-tis. He trusted no one-he must see to everything himself and he was not lazy, which was bad for us.

"So you are Brother Julian 8th!" he repeated. "I do not have good reports of you. I have come for two reasons tonight. One is to warn you that the Kash Guard is commanded by a different sort of man from him whom I relieved. I will stand no trifling and no treason. There must be unquestioned loyalty to the Jemadar at Washington-every national and local law will be enforced. Trouble makers and traitors will get short shrift. A manifesto will be read in each market place Saturday-a manifesto that I have just received from Washington. Our great Jemadar has conferred greater powers upon the commanders of the Kash Guard. You will come to me with all your grievances. Where justice miscarries I shall be the court of last resort. The judgment of any court may be appealed to me.

"On the other hand, let wrongdoers beware as under the new law any cause may be tried before a summary military court over which the commander of the Kash Guard must preside."

We saw what it meant-it didn't require much intelligence to see the infamy and horror of it. It meant nothing more nor less than that our lives and liberty were in the hands of a single man and that Jarth had struck the greatest blow of all at human happiness in a land where we had thought such a state no longer existed-taken from us the last mocking remnant of our already lost freedom, that he might build for his own aggrandizement a powerful political military machine.

"And," continued Or-tis, "I have come for another reason-a reason that looks bad for you, Brother Julian; but we shall see what we shall see," and turning to the men behind him he issued a curt command: "Search the place!" That was all; but I saw, in memory, another man standing in this same living room-a man from beneath whose coat fell an empty sack when he raised an arm.

For an hour, they searched that little three room house. For an hour they tumbled our few belongings over and over; but mostly they searched the living room and especially about the fireplace did they hunt for a hidden nook. A dozen times my heart stood still as I saw them feeling of the stones above the mantel.

We all knew what they sought-all but Juana-and we knew what it would mean if- they found it. Death for father and for me, too, perhaps, and worse for mother and the girl. And to think that Johansen had done this awful thing to curry favor for himself with the new commander! I knew it was he-I knew it as surely as though Or-tis had told me. To curry fa-

vor with the commander. I thought that that was the reason then. God, had I but known his real reason!

And while they searched, Or-tis talked with us. Mostly he talked with mother and Juana. I hated the way that he looked at them, especially Juana; but his words were fair enough. He seemed to be trying to get an expression from them of their political ideas-he, who was of the class that had ruthlessly stolen from women the recognition they had won in the twentieth century after ages of slavery and trials, attempting to sound them on their political faiths! They had none-no women have any-they only know that they hate and loathe the oppressors who have hurled them back into virtual slavery. That is their politics; that is their religion. Hate. But then the world is all hate-hate and misery.

Father says that it was not always so; but that once the world was happy-at least, our part of the world; but the people didn't know when they were well off. They came from all other parts of the world to share our happiness and when they had won it they sought to overthrow it, and when the Kalkars came they helped them.

Well, they searched for an hour and found nothing; but I knew that Or-tis was not satisfied that the thing he sought was not there and toward the end of the search I could see that he was losing patience. He took direct charge at last and then when they had no better success under his direction he became very angry.

"Yankee swine!" he cried suddenly, turning upon father. "You will find that you cannot fool a descendant of the great Jemadar Orthis as you have fooled the others-not for long. I have a nose for traitors-I can smell a Yank farther than most men can see one. Take a warning, take a warning to your kind. It will be death or the mines for every traitor in the teivos."

He stood then in silence for a moment, glaring at father and then his gaze moved to Juana.

"Who are you, girl?" he demanded. "Where do you live and what do you do that adds to the prosperity of the community?"

"Adds to the prosperity of the community!" It was a phrase often on their lips and it was always directed at us-a meaningless phrase, as there was no prosperity. We supported the Kalkars and that was their idea of prosperity. I suppose ours was to get barely sufficient to sustain life and strength to enable us to continue slaving for them.

"I live with Mollie Sheehan," replied Juana, "and help her care for the chickens and the little pigs; also I help with the housework."

"H-m!" ejaculated Or-tis. "Housework! That is good-I shall be needing some one to keep my quarters tidy. How about it, my girl? It will be easy work, and I will pay you well-no pigs or chickens to slave for. Eh?"

"But I love the little pigs and chickens," she pleaded, "and I am happy with Mollie-I do not wish to change."

"Do not wish to change, eh?" he mimicked her. She had drawn farther

behind me now, as though for protection, and closer-I could feel her body touching mine. "Mollie can doubtless take care of her own pigs and chickens without help. If she has so many she cannot do it alone, then she has too many, and we will see why it is that she is more prosperous than the rest of us-probably she should pay a larger income tax-we shall see."

"Oh, no!" cried Juana, frightened now on Mollie's account. "Please, she has only a few, scarcely enough that she and her man may live after the taxes are paid."

"Then she does not need you to help her," said Or-tis with finality, a nasty sneer upon his lip. "You will come and work for me, girl!"

And then Juana surprised me-she surprised us all, and particularly Or-tis. Before she had been rather pleading and seemingly a little frightened; but now she drew herself to her full height and with her chin in air looked Or-tis straight in the eye.

"I will not come," she said, haughtily; "I do not wish to." That was all.

Or-tis looked surprised; his soldiers, shocked. For a moment no one spoke. I glanced at mother. She was not trembling as I had expected. Her head was up, too, and she was openly looking her scorn of the Kalkar. Father stood as he usually did before them, with his head bowed; but I saw that he was watching Or-tis out of the corners of his eyes and that his fingers were moving as might the fingers of hands fixed upon a hated throat.

"You will come," said Or-tis, a little red in the face now at this defiance. "There are ways," and he looked straight at me-and then he turned upon his heel and, followed by his Kash Guard, left the house.

CHAPTER V.

THE FIGHT ON MARKET DAY

WHEN THE DOOR had closed upon them Juana buried her face in her hands.

"Oh, what misery I bring everywhere," she sobbed. "To my father and mother I brought death, and now to you all and to Jim and Mollie I am bringing ruin and perhaps death also. But it shall not be-you shall not suffer for me! He looked straight at you, Julian, when he made his threat. What could he mean to do? You have done nothing. But you need not fear. I know how I may undo the harm I have so innocently done."

We tried to assure her that we did not care-that we would protect her as best we could and that she must not feel that she had brought any greater burden upon us than we already carried; but she only shook her head and at last asked me to take her home to Mollie's.

She was very quiet all the way back, though I did my best to cheer her up.

"He cannot make you work for him," I insisted. "Even the Twenty-Four, rotten as it is, would never dare enforce such an order. We are not yet entirely slaves."

"But I am afraid that he will find a way," she replied, "through you, my friend. I saw him look at you and it was a very ugly look."

"I do not fear," I said.

"I fear for you. No, it shall not be!" She spoke with such vehement finality that she almost startled me and then she bid me good night and went into Mollies house and closed the door.

All the way back home I was much worried about her, for I did not like to see her unhappy. I felt that her fears were exaggerated, for even such a powerful man as the commandant could not make her work for him if she did not wish to. Later he might take her as his woman if she had no man, but even then she had some choice in the matter-a month in which to choose some one else if she did not care to bear his children. That was the law.

Of course, they found ways to circumvent the law when they wanted a girl badly enough-the man of her choice might be apprehended upon some trumped-up charge, or even be found some morning mysteriously murdered. It must be a heroic woman who stood out against them for long, and a man must love a girl very deeply to sacrifice his life for her-and then not save her. There was but one way and by the time I reached my cot I was almost frantic with fear lest she might seize upon it.

For a few minutes I paced the floor and with every minute the conviction grew that the worst was about to happen. It became an obsession. I could see her even as plainly as with my physical eyesight and then I could stand it no longer.

Bolting for the doorway I ran as fast as my legs would carry me in the direction of Jim's house. Just before I reached it I saw a shadowy figure moving in the direction of the river. I could not make out who it was; but I knew and redoubled my speed.

A low bluff overhands the stream at this point and upon its edge- I saw the figure pause for a moment and then disappear. There was a splash in the water below just as I reached the rim of the bluff-a splash and circling rings spreading outward on the surface of the river in the starlight.

I saw these things-the whole picture-in the fraction of a moment, for I scarcely paused upon the bluff's edge; but dove headlong or the rippling water close to the center of those diverging circles.

We came up together, side by side, and I reached out and seized her tunic, and thus, holding her at arm's length, I swam ashore with her, keeping her chin above water. She did not struggle and when at last we stood upon the bank she turned upon me, tearless, yet sobbing.

"Why did you do it?" she moaned. "Oh, why did you do it? It was the only way-the only way."

She looked so forlorn and unhappy and so altogether beautiful that I could scarcely keep from taking her in my arms, for then, quite unexpectedly, I realized what I had been too stupid to realize before-that I loved her.

But I only took her hands in mine and pressed them very tightly and begged her to promise me that she would not attempt this thing again. I told her that she might never hear from Or-tis again and that it was wicked to destroy herself until there was no other way.

"It is not that I fear myself," she said. "I can always find this way out at the last minute; but I fear for you who have been kind to me. If I go now you will no longer be in danger."

"I would rather be in danger than have you go," I said simply. "I do not fear."

And she promised me before I left her that she would not try it again until there was no other way.

As I walked slowly homeward my thoughts were filled with bitterness and sorrow. My soul was in revolt against this cruel social order that even robbed youth of happiness and love. Although I had seen but little of either something within me-some inherent instinct I suspect-cried aloud that these were my birthright and that I was being robbed of them by the spawn of lunar interlopers. My Americanism was very strong in me-stronger, perhaps, because of the century old effort of our oppressors to crush it and because always we must suppress any outward evidence of it. They called us Yanks in contempt; but the appellation was our pride. And we, in turn, often spoke of them as kaisers; but not to their faces. Father says that in ancient times the word had the loftiest of meanings; but now it has the lowest.

As I approached the house I saw that the candle was still burning in the living room. I had left so hurriedly that I had given it no thought, and as I came closer I saw something else, too. I was walking very slowly and in the soft dust of the pathway my soft boots made no sound, or I might not have seen what I did see-two figures, close in the shadow of the wall, peering through one of our little windows into the living room.

I crept stealthily forward until I was close enough to see that one was in the uniform of a Kash Guard while the other was clothed as are those of my class. In the latter I recognized the stoop shouldered, lanky figure of Peter Johansen. I was not at all surprised at this confirmation of my suspicions.

I knew what they were there for-hoping to learn the secret hiding place of the Flagg-but I also knew that unless they already knew it there was no danger of their discovering it from the outside, since it had been removed from its hiding place but once in my lifetime that I knew of and might never again be, especially since we knew that we were suspected. So I hid and watched them for a while and then circled the house and entered from the front as though I did not know that they were there, for it would never do to let them know that they had been discovered.

Taking off my clothes I went to bed, after putting out the candle. I do not know how long they remained-it was enough to know that we were being watched, and though it was not pleasant I was glad that we were forewarned. In the morning I told father and mother what I had seen. Mother sighed and shook her head.

"It is coming," she said. "I always knew that sooner or later it would come. One by one they get us-now it is our turn."

Father said nothing. He finished his

breakfast in silence and when he left the house he walked with his eyes upon the ground, his shoulders stooped and his chin upon his breast-slowly, almost unsteadily, he walked, like a man whose heart and spirit are both broken.

I saw mother choke back a sob as she watched him go and I went and put my arm about her.

"I fear for him, Julian," she said. "A spirit such as his suffers terribly the stings of injustice and degradation. Some of the others do not seem to take it so to heart as he; but he is a proud man of a proud line. I am afraid-" she paused as though fearing even to voice her fears-"I am afraid that he will do away with himself."

"No," I said, "he is too brave a man for that. This will all blow over-they only suspect-they do not know, and we shall be careful and then all will be right again-as right as anything ever is in this world."

"But Or-tis?" she questioned. "It will not be right until he has his will."

I knew that she meant Juana.

"He will never have his will," I said. "Am I not here?"

She smiled indulgently. "You are very strong, my boy," she said; "but what are two brawny arms against the Kash Guard?"

"They would be enough for Or-tis," I replied.

"You would kill him?" she whispered. "They would tear you to pieces!"

"They can tear me to pieces but once."

It was market day and I went in with a few wethers, some hides and cheese. Father did not come along-in fact, I advised him not to as Soor would be there and also Hoffmeyer. One cheese I took as tribute to Soor. God, how I hated to do it! But both mother and father thought it best to propitiate the fellow, and I suppose they were right. A lifetime of suffering does not incline one to seek further trouble.

The market place was full, for I was a little late. There were many Kash Guards in evidence-more than usual. It was a warm day-the first really warm day we had had-and a number of men were sitting beneath a canopy at one side of the market place in front of Hoffmeyer's office. As I approached I saw that Or-tis was there, as well as Pthav, the coal baron, and Hoffmeyer, of course, with several others including some Kalkar women and children.

I recognized Pthav's woman-a renegade Yank who had gone to him willingly-and their little child, a girl of about six. The latter was playing in the dust in front of the canopy some hundred feet from the group, and I had scarcely recognized her when I saw that which made my heart almost stop beating for an instant.

Two men were driving a small bunch of cattle into the market place upon the other side of the canopy, when suddenly I saw one of the creatures, a great bull, break away from the herd and with lowered head charge toward the tiny figure playing, unconscious of danger in the dust. The men tried to head the beast off, but their efforts were futile. Those under the canopy saw the

child's danger at the same time that I did and they rose and cried aloud in warning. Pthav's woman shrieked and Or-tis yelled lustily for the Kash Guard; but none hastened in the path of the infuriated beast to the rescue of the child.

I was the closest to her and the moment that I saw her danger I started forward; but even as I ran there passed through my brain some terrible thoughts. She is Kalkar! She is the spawn of the beast Pthav and of the woman who turned traitor to her kind to win ease and comfort and safety! Many a little life has been snuffed out because of her father and his class! Would they save a sister or a daughter of mine?

I thought all these things as I ran; but I did not stop running-something within impelled me to her aid. It must have been simply that she was a little child and I the descendant of American gentlemen. No, I kept right on in the face of the fact that my sense of justice cried out that I let the child die.

I reached her just a moment before the bull did and when he saw me there between him and the child he stopped and with his head down he pawed the earth, throwing clouds of dust about, and bellowed-and then he came for me; but I met him half way, determined to hold him off until the child escaped if it were humanly possible for me to do so. He was a huge beast and quite evidently a vicious one, which possibly explained the reason for bringing him to market, and altogether it seemed to me that he would make short work of me; but I meant to die fighting.

I called to the little girl to run and then the bull and I came together. I seized his horns as he attempted to toss me, and I exerted all the strength in my young body. I had thought that I had let the Hellhounds feel it all that other night; but now I knew that I had yet had more in reserve, for to my astonishment I held that great beast and slowly, very slowly, I commenced to twist his head to the left.

He struggled and fought and bellowed-I could feel the muscles of my back and arms and legs hardening to the strain that was put upon them; but almost from the first instant I knew that I was master. The Kash Guards were coming now on the run, and I could hear Or-tis shouting to them to shoot the bull; but before they reached me I gave the animal a final mighty wrench so that he went first down upon one knee and then over on his side and there I held him until a sergeant came and put a bullet through his head.

When he was quite dead Or-tis and Pthav and the others approached. I saw them coming as I was returning to my wethers, my skins and my cheese. Or-tis called to me and I turned and stood looking at him as I had no mind to have any business with any of them that I could avoid.

"Come here, my man," he called.

I moved sullenly toward him a few paces and stopped again.

"What do you want of me?" I asked.

"Who are you?" He was eying me closely now. "I never saw such strength in any man. You should be in the Kash Guard. How would you like that?"

"I would not like it," I replied. It was about then, I guess, that he recognized me, for his eyes hardened. "No," he said, "we do not want such as you among loyal men." He turned upon his heel; but immediately wheeled toward me again.

"See to it, young man," he snapped, "that you use that strength of yours wisely and in good causes."

"I shall use it wisely," I replied, "and in the best of causes."

I think Pthav's woman had intended to thank me for saving her child, and perhaps Pthav had, too, for they had both come toward me; but when they saw Or-tis's evident hostility toward me they turned away, for which I was thankful. I saw Soor looking on with a sneer on his lips and Hoffmeyer eying me with that cunning expression of his.

I gathered up my produce and proceeded to that part of the market place where we habitually showed that which we had to sell, only to find that a man named Vonbulen was there ahead of me. Now there is an unwritten law that each family has its own place in the market. I was the third generation of Julians who had brought produce to this spot-formerly horses mostly, for we were a family of horsemen; but more recently goats since the government had taken over the horse industry. Though father and I still broke horses occasionally for the Twenty-Four, we did not own or raise them any more.

Vonbulen had had a little pen in a far corner, where trade was not so brisk as it usually was in our section, and I could not understand what he was doing in ours, where he had three or four scrub pigs and a few sacks of grain. Approaching, I asked him why he was there.

"This is my pen now," he said. "Tax collector Soor told me to use it."

"You will get out of it," I replied. "You know that it is ours-every one in the teivos knows that it is and has been for many years. My grandfather built it and my family have kept it in repair. You will get out!"

"I will not get out," he replied truculently. He was a very large man and when he was angry he looked quite fierce, as he had large mustaches which he brushed upward on either side of his nose-like the tusks of one of his boars.

"You will get out or be thrown out," I told him; but he put his hand on the gate and attempted to bar my entrance.

Knowing him to be heavy minded and stupid I thought to take him by surprise, nor did I fail as, with a hand upon the topmost rail, I vaulted the gate full in his face, and letting my knees strike his chest, I sent him tumbling backward into the filth of his swine. So hard I struck him that he turned a complete back somersault and as he scrambled to his feet, his lips fouled with oaths, I saw murder in his eye. And how he charged me! It was for all the world like the charge of the great bull I had just vanquished except that I think that Vonbulen was angrier than the bull and not so good looking.

His great fists were flailing about in a most terrifying manner and his mouth was open just as though he intended

eating me alive; but for some reason I felt no fear. In fact, I had to smile to see his face and his fierce mustache smeared with dirt.

I parried his first wild blows and then stepping in close I struck him lightly in the face-I am sure I did not strike him hard, for I did not mean to-I wanted to play with him; but the result was as astonishing to me as it must have been to him, though not so painful. He rebounded from my fist fully, three feet and then went over on his back again, spitting blood and teeth from his mouth.

And then I picked him up by the scruff of his neck and the seat of his breeches, and lifting him high above my head, I hurled him out of the pen into the market place where, for the first time, I saw a large crowd of interested spectators.

Vonbulen was not a popular character in the teivos, and many were the broad smiles I saw on the faces of those of my class; but there were others who did not smile. They were Kalkars and half breeds.

I saw all this in a single glance and then I returned to my work, for I was not through. Vonbulen lay where he had alighted and after him and onto him, one by one, I threw his sacks of grain and his scrub pigs and then I opened the gate and started out to bring in my own produce and live stock. As I did so I almost ran into Soor, standing there eying me with a most malignant expression upon his face.

"What does this mean?" he fairly screamed at me.

"It means," I replied, "that no one can steal the place of a Julian as easily as Vonbulen thought."

"He did not steal it," yelled Soor. "I gave it to him. Get out! It is his."

"It is not yours to give," I replied. "I know my rights and no man shall take them from me without a fight. Do you understand me?"

And then I brushed by him without another glance and drove my wethers into the pen. As I did so I saw that no one was smiling any more-my friends looked very glum and very frightened; but a man came up from my right and stood by my side, facing Soor, and when I turned my eyes in his direction I saw that it was Jim.

Then I realized how serious my act must have seemed, and I was sorry that Jim had come and thus silently announced that he stood with me in what I had done. No others came, although there were many who hated the Kalkars fully as much as we.

Soor was furious; but he could not stop me. Only the Twenty-Four could take the pen away from me. He called me names and threatened me; but I noticed that he waited until he had walked a short distance away before he did so. It was as food to a starving man to know that even one of our oppressors feared me. So far this had been the happiest day of my life.

I hurriedly got the goats into the pen and then, with one of the cheeses in my hand, I called to Soor. He turned to see what I wanted, showing his teeth like a rat at bay.

"You told my father to bring you a present," I yelled at the top of my lungs, so that all about in every direction heard and turned toward us. "Here it is!" I cried. "Here is your bribe!" and I hurled the cheese with all my strength full in his face.

He went down like a felled ox and the people scattered like frightened rabbits. Then I went back into the pen and started to open and arrange my hides across the fence so that they might be inspected by prospective purchasers.

Jim, whose pen was next to ours, stood looking across the fence at me for several minute. At last he spoke:

"You have done a very rash thing, Julian," he said, and then: "I envy you."

It was not quite plain what he meant and yet I guessed that he, too, would have been willing to die for the satisfaction of having defied them. I had not done this thing merely in the heat of anger or the pride of strength; but from the memory of my father's bowed head and my mother's tears-in the realization that we were better dead than alive unless we could hold our heads aloft as men should. Yes, I still saw my father's chin upon his breast and his unsteady gait and I was ashamed for him and for myself; but I had partially washed away the stain and there had finally crystalized in my brain something that must have been forming long in solution there-the determination to walk through the balance of my life with my head up and my fists ready-a man-however short my walk might be.

CHAPTER VI.
THE COURT MARTIAL

THAT AFTERNOON I saw a small detachment of the Kash Guard crossing the market place. They came directly toward my pen and stopped before it. The sergeant in charge addressed me: "You are Brother Julian 9th?" he asked.

"I am Julian 9th," I replied.

"You had better be Brother Julian 9th when you are addressed by Brother General Or-tis," he snapped back. "You are under arrest-come with me!"

"What for?" I asked.

"Brother Or-tis will tell you if you do not know-you are to be taken to him."

So! It had come and it had come quickly. I felt sorry for mother; but, in a way, I was glad. If only there had been no such person in the world as Juana St. John I should have been almost happy, for I knew mother and father would come soon and, as she always taught me, we would be reunited in a happy world on the other side-a world in which there were no Kalkars or taxes-but then there was a Juana St. John and I was very sure of this world, while not quite so sure of the other, which I had never seen, nor any one who had.

There seemed no particular reason for refusing to accompany the Kash Guard. They would simply have killed me with their bullets and if I went I might have an opportunity to wipe out some more important swine than they before I was killed-if they intended killing me. One never knows what they will do-other than that it will be the wrong thing.

Well, they took me to the headquar-

ters of the teivos, way down on the shore of the lake; but as they took me in a large wagon drawn by horses it was not a tiresome trip and, as I was not worrying, I enjoyed it. We passed through many market places, for numerous districts lie between ours and headquarters, and always the people stared at me, just as I had stared at other prisoners being carted away to no one knew what fate. Sometimes they came back-sometimes they did not. I wondered which I would do.

At last we arrived at headquarters after passing through miles of lofty ruins where I had played and explored as a child. I was taken immediately into Or-tis's presence. He sat in a large room at the head of a long table, and I saw that there were other men sitting along the sides of the table, the local representatives of that hated authority known as the Twenty-Four, the form of government that the Kalkars had brought with them from the moon a century before. The Twenty-Four originally consisted of a committee of that number. Now, however, it was but a name that stood for power, for government and for tyranny. Jarth the Jemadar was, in reality, what his lunar title indicated-emperor. Surrounding him was a committee of twenty-four Kalkars; but as they had been appointed by him and could be removed by him at will, they were nothing more than his tools. And this body before which I had been haled had in our teivos the same power as the Twenty-Four which gave it birth, and so we spoke of it, too, as the Twenty-Four, or as the Teivos, as I at first thought it to be.

Many of these men I recognized as members of the Teivos. Pthav and Hoffmeyer were there, representing our district, or misrepresenting it, as father always put it, yet I was presently sure that this could not be a meeting of the Teivos proper, as these were held in another building father south-a magnificent pillared pile of olden tunes that the government had partially restored as they had the headquarters, which also had been a beautiful building in a past age, its great lions still standing on either side of its broad entranceway.

No, it was not the Teivos; but what could it be, and then it dawned upon me that it must be an arm of the new law that Or-tis had announced, and such it proved to be-a special military tribunal for special offenders. This was the first session and it chanced to be my luck that I committed my indiscretion just in time to be haled before it when it needed someone to experiment on.

I was made to stand, under guard, at the foot of the table and as I looked up and down the rows of faces on either side I saw not a friendly eye-no person of my class or race-just swine, swine, swine. Low-browed, brute-faced men, slouching in their chairs, slovenly in their dress, uncouth, unwashed, unwholesome looking-this was the personnel of the court that was to try me-for what?

Or-tis asked who appeared against me and what was the charge. Then I saw Soor for the first time. He should have been in his district collecting his taxes;

but he wasn't. No, he was there on more pleasant business. He eyed me malevolently and stated the charge: resisting an officer of the law in the discharge of his duty and assaulting same with a deadly weapon with intent to commit murder.

They all looked ferociously at me, expecting, no doubt, that I would tremble with terror, as most of my class did before them; but I couldn't tremble-the charge struck me as so ridiculous. As a matter of fact, I am afraid that I grinned. I know I did.

"What is it," asked Or-tis, "that amuses you so?"

"The charge," I replied.

"What is there funny about that?" he asked again. "Men have been shot for less-men who were not suspected of treasonable acts."

"I did not resist an officer in the discharge of his duty," I said. "It is not one of a tax collector's duties to put a family out of its pen at the market place, is it?-a pen they have occupied for three generations. I ask you, Or-tis, is it?"

Or-tis half rose from his chair. "How dare you address me thus?" he cried.

The others turned scowling faces upon me and, beating the table with their dirty fists, they all shouted and bellowed at me at once; but I kept my chin up as I had sworn to do until I died.

Finally they quieted down and again I put my question to Or-tis and Ill give him credit for answering it fairly. "No," he said, "only the Teivos may do that-the Teivos or the commandant."

"Then I did not resist an officer in the discharge of his duty," I shot back at them, "for I only refused to leave the pen that is mine. And now another question: Is a cheese a deadly weapon?"

They had to admit that it was not. "He demanded a present from my father," I explained, "and I brought him a cheese. He had no right under the law to demand it, and so I threw it at him and it hit him in the face. I shall deliver thus every such illegal tithe that is demanded of us. I have my rights under the law and I intend to see that they are respected."

They had never been talked to thus before and suddenly I realized that by merest chance I had stumbled upon the only way in which to meet these creatures. They were moral as well as physical cowards. They could not face an honest, fearless man-already they were showing signs of embarrassment. They knew that I was right and while they could have condemned me had I bowed the knee to them they hadn't the courage to do it in my presence.

The natural outcome was that they sought a scapegoat, and Or-tis was not long in finding one-his baleful eye alighted upon Soor.

"Does this man speak the truth?" he cried at the tax collector. "Did you turn him out of his pen? Did he do no more than throw a cheese at you?"

Soor, a coward before those in authority over him, flushed and stammered.

"He tried to kill me," he mumbled lamely, "and he did almost kill Brother Vonbulen."

Then I told them of that-and always I spoke in a tone of authority and I held my ground. I did not fear them and they knew it. Sometimes I think they attributed it to some knowledge I had of something that might be menacing them-for they were always afraid of revolution. That is why they ground us down so.

The outcome of it was that I was let go with a warning-a warning that if I did not address my fellows as brother I would be punished, and even then I gave the parting shot, for I told them I would call no man brother unless he was.

The whole affair was a farce; but all trials were farces, only, as a rule, the joke was on the accused. They were not conducted in a dignified or proper manner as I imagine trials in ancient times to have been. There was neither order nor system.

I had to walk all the way home-another manifestation of justice-and I arrived there an hour or two after supper time. I found Jim and Mollie and Juana at the house, and I could see that mother had been crying. She started again when she saw me. Poor mother! I wonder if it has always been such a terrible thing to be a mother; but, no, it cannot have been, else the human race would long since have been extinct-as the Kalkars will rapidly make it, anyway.

Jim had told them of the happenings in the market place-the episode of the bull, the encounter with Vonbulen and the matter of Soor. For the first time in my life, and the only time, I heard my father laugh aloud. Juana laughed, too; but there was still an undercurrent of terror that I could feel and which Mollie finally voiced.

"They will get us yet, Julian," she said; "but what you have done is worth dying for."

"Yes!" cried my father. "I can go to the butcher with a smile on my lips after this. He has done what I always wanted to do; but dared not. If I am a coward I can at least thank God that there sprang from my loins a brave and fearless man."

"You are not a coward!" I cried, and mother looked at me and smiled. I was glad that I said that, then.

You may not understand what father meant by "going to the butcher," but it is simple. The manufacture of ammunition is a lost art-that is, the high-powered ammunition that the Kash Guard likes to use-and so they conserve all the vast stores of ammunition that were handed down from ancient times-millions upon millions of rounds-or they would not be able to use the rifles that were handed down with the ammunition. They use this ammunition only in cases of dire necessity, a fact which long ago placed the firing squad of old in the same class with flying machines and automobiles. Now they cut our throats when they kill us and the man who does it is known as the butcher.

I walked home with Jim and Mollie and Juana; but more especially Juana. Again I noticed that strange magnetic force which drew me to her, so that I kept bumping into her every step or

two, and, intentionally, I swung my arm that was nearest to her in the hope that my hand might touch hers, nor was I doomed to disappointment and at every touch I thrilled. I could not but notice that Juana made no mention of my clumsiness, nor did she appear to attempt to prevent our contact; but yet I was afraid of her-afraid that she would notice and afraid that she would not. I am good with horses and goats and Hellhounds; but I am not much good with girls.

We had talked upon many subjects and I knew her views and beliefs and she knew mine, so when we parted and I asked her if she would go with me on the morrow, which was the first Sunday of the month, she knew what I meant. She said that she would, and I went home very happy, for I knew that she and I were going to defy the common enemy side by side-that hand in hand we would face the Grim Reaper for the sake of the greatest cause on earth.

On the way home I overtook Peter Johansen going in the direction of our home. I could see that he had no mind to meet me and he immediately fell to explaining lengthily why he was out at night, for the first thing I did was to ask him what strange business took him abroad so often lately after the sun had set.

I could see him flush even in the dark.

"Why," he exclaimed, "this is the first time in months that I have gone out after supper," and then something about the man made me lose my temper and I blurted out what was in my heart.

"You lie!" I cried. "You lie, you damned spy!"

And then Peter Johansen went white and, suddenly whipping a knife from his clothes, he leaped at me, striking wildly for any part of me that the blade might reach. At first he almost got me, so unexpected and so venomous was the attack; but though I was struck twice on the arm and cut a little I managed to ward the point from any vital part, and in a moment I had seized his knife wrist. That was the end-I just twisted it a little-I did not mean to twist hard-and something snapped inside his wrist.

Peter let out an awful scream, his knife dropped from his fingers, and I pushed him from me and gave him a good kick as he was leaving-a kick that I think he will remember for some time. Then I picked up his knife and hurled it as far as I could in the direction of the river, where I think it landed, and went on my way toward home-whistling.

When I entered the house mother came out of her room and, putting her arms about my neck, she clung closely to me.

"Dear boy," she murmured, "I am so happy, because you are happy. She is a dear girl, and I love her as much as you do."

"What is the matter?" I asked. "What are you talking about?"

"I heard you whistling," she said, "and I knew what it meant-grown men whistle but once in their lives."

I picked her up in my arms.

"Oh, mother, dear!" I cried. "I wish it were true and maybe it will be some

day-if I am not too much of a coward; but not yet."

"Then why were you whistling?" she asked, surprised and a bit skeptical, too, I imagine.

"I whistled," I explained, "because I just broke the wrist of a spy and kicked him across the road."

"Peter?" she asked, trembling.

"Yes, mother, Peter. I called him a spy and he tried to knife me."

"Oh, my son!" she cried. "You did not know. It is my fault, I should have told you. Now he will fight no more in the dark; but will come out in the open and when he does that I am lost."

"What do you mean?" I asked.

"I do not mind dying," she said; "but they will take your father first, because of me."

"What do you mean? I can understand nothing of what you are driving at."

"Then listen," she said. "Peter wants me. That is the reason he is spying on your father. If he can prove something against him and father is taken to the mines or killed, Peter will claim me."

"How do you know this?" I asked.

"Peter himself has told me that he wants me. He tried to make me leave your dear father and go with him, and when I refused he bragged that he was in the favor of the Kalkars and that he would get me in the end. He has tried to buy my honor with your father's life. That is why I have been so afraid and so unhappy; but I knew that you and father would rather die than have me do that thing, and so I have withstood him."

"Did you tell father?" I asked.

"I dared not. He would have killed Peter and that would have been the end of us, for Peter stands high in the graces of the authorities."

"I will kill him!" I said.

She tried to dissuade me, and finally I had to promise her that I would wait until I had provocation that the authorities might recognize. God knows I had provocation enough, though.

After breakfast the next day we set out singly and in different directions, as was always our custom on the first Sunday in each month. I went to Jim's first to get Juana as she did not know the way, having never been with us. I found her ready and waiting and alone, as Jim and Mollie had started a few minutes before, and seemingly very glad to see me.

I told her nothing of Peter, as there is enough trouble in the world without burdening people with any that does not directly threaten them. I led her up the river for a mile and all the while we watched to see if we were followed. Then we found a skiff, where I had hidden it, and crossed the river. After hiding it again we continued on up for half a mile. Here was a raft that I had made myself, and on this we poled again to the other shore-if any followed us they must have swum, for there were no other boats on this part of the river.

I had come this way for several years-in fact, ever since I was fifteen years old-and no one had ever suspected or followed me, yet I never relaxed my vigilance, which may account for the fact that I was not apprehended.

No one ever saw me take to either the skiff or the raft and no one could even have guessed my destination, so circuitous was the way.

A mile west of the river is a thick forest of very old trees and toward this I led Juana. At its verge we sat down, ostensibly to rest; but really to see if any one was near who might have followed us or who could accidentally discover our next move. There was no one in sight, and so, with light hearts, we arose and entered the forest.

For a quarter of a mile we made our way along a winding path and then I turned to the left at a right angle and entered thick brush here there was no trail. Always we did this, never covering the last quarter of a mile over the same route, lest we make a path that might be marked and followed.

Presently we came to a pile of brush wood, beneath one edge of which was an opening into which, by stooping low, one might enter. It was screened from view by a fallen tree, over which had been heaped broken branches. Even in winter time and early spring the opening in the brush beyond was invisible to the passers-by, if there had been any passers-by. A man trailing lost stock might come this way; but no others, for it was a lonely and unfrequented spot. During the summer, the season of the year when there was the greatest danger of discovery, the entire brush pile and its tangled screen were hidden completely beneath a mass of wild vines, so that it was with difficulty that we found it ourselves.

Into this opening I led Juana-taking her by the hand as one might a blind person, although it was not so dark within that she could not see perfectly every step she took. However, I took her by the hand, a poor excuse being better than none. The winding tunnel beneath the brush was a hundred yards long, perhaps-I wished then that it had been a hundred miles. It ended abruptly before a rough stone wall in which was a heavy door. Its oaken panels were black with age and streaked with green from the massive hinges that ran across its entire width in three places, while from the great lag screws that fastened them to the door brownish streaks of rust ran down to mingle with the green and the black. In patches moss grew upon it, so that all in all it had the appearance of great antiquity, though even the oldest among those who knew of it at all could only guess at its age. Above the door, carved in the stone, was a shepherd's crook and the words, Dieu et man droit.

Halting before this massive portal I struck the panels once with my knuckles, counted five and struck again, once; then I counted three and, in the same cadence, struck three times. It was the signal for the day-never twice was it the same. Should one come with the wrong signal and later force the door he would find only an empty room beyond.

Now the door opened a crack and an eye peered forth, then it swung outward and we entered a long, low room lighted by burning wicks floating in oil. Across the width of the room were rough wooden benches and at the far end a

raised platform upon which stood Orrin Colby, the blacksmith, behind an altar which was the sawn off trunk of a tree, the roots of which, legend has it, still run down into the ground beneath the church, which is supposed to have been built around it.

CHAPTER VII.

BETRAYED

THERE WERE twelve people sitting on the benches when we entered, so that with Orrin Colby, ourselves and the man at the door we were sixteen in all. Colby is the head of our church; his great grandfather was a Methodist minister. Father and mother were there, sitting next to Jim and Mollie, and there were Samuels the Jew, Betty Worth, who was Dennis Corrigan's woman, and all the other familiar faces.

They had been waiting for us and as soon as we were seated the services commenced with a prayer, every one standing with bowed head. Orrin Colby always delivered this same short prayer at the opening of services each first Sunday of every month. It ran something like this:

"God of our fathers, through generations of persecution and cruelty in a world of hate that has turned against You, we stand at Your right hand, loyal to You and to our Flag. To us Your name stands for justice, humanity, love, happiness and right and the Flag is Your emblem. Once each month we risk our lives that Your name may not perish from the earth. Amen!"

From behind the altar he took a shepherd's crook to which was attached a flag like that in my father's possession and held it aloft, whereat we all knelt in silence for a few seconds. Then he replaced it and we arose. Then we sang a song-it was an old, old song that started like this: "Onward, Christian Soldiers." It was my favorite song. Mollie Sheehan played a violin while we sang.

Following the song Orrin Colby talked to us-he always talked about the practical things that affected our lives and our future. It was a homely talk, but it was full of hope for better times. I think that at these meetings, once each month, we heard the only suggestions of hope that ever came into our lives. There was something about Orrin Colby that inspired confidence and hope. These days were the bright spots in our drab existence.

After the talk we sang again and then Samuels the Jew prayed and the regular service was over, after which we had short talks by various members of our church. These talks were mostly on the subject which dominated the minds of all-a revolution but we never got any further than talking. How could we? We were probably the most thoroughly subjugated people the world ever had known-we feared our masters and we feared our neighbors. We did not know whom we might trust, outside that little coterie of ours, and so we dared not seek recruits for our cause, although we knew that there must be thousands who would sympathize with us. Spies and informers were everywhere-they, the Kash Guard and the butcher, were the agencies by which they controlled us; but of all we feared most the spies and

informers. For a woman, for a neighbor's house, and in one instance of which I know, for a setting of eggs, men have been known to inform on their friends-sending them to the mines or the butcher.

Following the talks we just visited together and gossiped for an hour or two, enjoying the rare treat of being able to speak our minds freely and fearlessly. I had to re-tell several times my experiences before Or-tis's new court-martial and I know that it was with difficulty that they believed that I had said the things I had to our masters and come away free and alive. They simply could not understand it.

All were warned of Peter Johansen and the names of others under suspicion of being informers were passed around that we might all be on our guard against them. We did not sing again, for even on these days that our hearts were lightest they were too heavy for song. About two o'clock the pass signal for the next meeting was given out and then we started away singly or in pairs. I volunteered to go last, with Juana, and see that the door was locked. An hour later we started out, about five minutes behind Samuels the Jew.

Juana's mother had passed down to her by word of mouth an unusually complete religious training for those days and she, in turn, had transmitted it to Juana. It seemed that they, too, had had a church in their district; but that a short time before it had been discovered by the authorities and destroyed, though none of the members of the organization had been apprehended. So close a watch was kept thereafter that they had never dared seek another meeting place.

She told me that their congregation was much like ours in personnel and with the knowledge she had of ancient religious customs it always seemed odd to her to see so different creeds worshiping under one roof in even greater harmony than many denominations of the same church knew in ancient times. Among us were descendants of Methodist, Presbyterian, Baptist, Roman Catholic and Jew that I knew of and how many more I did not know, nor did any of us care.

We worshiped an ideal and a great hope, both of which were all goodness, and we called these God. We did not care what our great-grandfathers thought about it or what some one a thousand years before had thought or done or what name they had given the Supreme Being, for we knew that there could be but one and whether we called Him one thing or another would not alter Him in any way. This much good, at least, the Kalkars had accomplished in the world; but it had come too late. Those who worshiped any god were becoming fewer and fewer. Our own congregation had fallen from twenty-two a year or so before to fifteen-until Juana made us sixteen.

Some had died natural deaths and some had gone to the mines or the butcher; but the principal reason of our decadence was the fact that there were too few children to take the place of the adults who died-that and our fear to seek converts. We were dying out, there was

no doubt of it, and with us was dying all religion. That was what the lunar theory was doing for the world; but it was only what any one might have expected. Intelligent men and women realized it from almost the instant that this lunar theory stuck its ugly head above our horizon-a political faith that would make all women the common property of all men could not by any remote possibility have respect, or even aught but fear, for any religion of ancient times, and the Kalkars did, just what any one might have known they would do-they deliberately and openly crushed all churches.

Juana and I had emerged from the wood when we noticed a man walking cautiously in the shade of the trees ahead of us. He seemed to be following some one and immediately there sprang to my thoughts the ever near suspicion-spy.

The moment that he turned a bend in the pathway and was out of our sight Juana and I ran forward as rapidly as we could go that we might get a closer view of him, nor were we disappointed. We saw him and recognized him and we also saw whom he shadowed. It was Peter Johansen, carrying one arm in a sling, sneaking along behind Samuels.

I knew that if Peter was permitted to shadow Samuels home he would discover the devious way the old man followed and immediately, even though he had suspicioned nothing in particular before, he would know that Moses had been upon some errand that he didn't wish the authorities to learn of. That would mean suspicion for old Samuels and suspicion usually ended in conviction upon one charge or another. How far he had followed him we could not guess, but already we knew that it was much too near the church for safety. I was much perturbed.

Casting about in my mind for some plan to throw Peter off the track I finally hit upon a scheme which I immediately put into execution. I knew the way that the old man followed to and from church and that presently he would make a wide detour that would bring him back to the river about a quarter of a mile below. Juana and I could walk straight to the spot and arrive long before Samuels did. And this we proceeded to do.

About half an hour before we reached the point at which we knew he would strike the river, we heard him coming and withdrew into some bushes. On he came all oblivious of the creature on his trail and a moment later we saw Peter come into view and halt at the edge of the trees. Then Juana and I stepped out and hailed Samuels.

"Did you see nothing of them?" I asked in a tone of voice loud enough to be distinctly heard by Peter, and then before Samuels could reply I added: "We have searched far up the river and never a sign of a goat about-I do not believe that they came this way after all; but if they did the Hellhounds will get them after dark. Come, now, we might as well start for home and give the search up as a bad job."

I had talked so much and so rapidly that Samuels had guessed that I must

have some reason for it, and so he held his peace, other than to say that he had seen nothing of any goats. Not once had Juana or I let our glances betray that we knew of Peter's presence, though I could not help but seeing him dodge behind a tree the moment that he saw us.

The three of us then continued on toward home in the shortest direction and on the way I whispered to Samuels what we had seen. The old man chuckled, for he thought as I did that my ruse must have effectually baffled Johansen-unless he had followed Moses farther than we guessed. We each turned a little white as the consequences of such a possibility were borne home upon us. We did not want Peter to know that we even guessed that we were followed and so we never once looked behind us, not even Juana, which was remarkable for a woman, nor did we see him again, though we felt that he was following us. I for one was sure, though, that he was following at a safer distance since I had joined Samuels.

Very cautiously during the ensuing week the word was passed around by means with which we were familiar that Johansen had followed Samuels from church; but as the authorities paid no more attention to Moses than before we finally concluded that we had thrown Peter off the trail.

The Sunday following church we were all seated in Jim's yard under one of his trees that had already put forth its young leaves and afforded shade from the sun. We had been talking of homely things-the conning crops, the newborn kids, Mollies little pigs. The world seemed unusually kindly. The authorities had not persecuted us of late. A respite of two weeks seemed like heaven to us. We were quite sure by this time that Peter Johansen had discovered nothing and our hearts were freer than for a long time past.

We were sitting thus in quiet and contentment, enjoying a brief rest from our lives of drudgery, when we heard the pounding of horses' hoofs upon the hard earth of the path that leads down the river in the direction of the market place. Suddenly the entire atmosphere changed-relaxed nerves became suddenly taut; peaceful eyes resumed their hunted expression. Why? The Kash Guard rides.

And so they came-fifty of them-and at their head rode Brother General Or-tis. At the gateway of Jim's house they drew rein and Or-tis dismounted and entered the yard. He looked at us as a man might look at carrion; and he gave us no greeting, which suited us perfectly. He walked straight to Juana, who was seated on a little bench beside which I stood leaning against the bole of the tree. None of us moved. He halted before the girl.

"I have come to tell you," he said to her, "that I have done you the honor to choose you as my woman, to bear my children and keep my house in order."

He stood then looking at her and I could feel the hair upon my head rise and the corners of my upper lip twitched-I know not why. I only know that I wanted to fly at his throat and kill him, to tear his flesh with my teeth-to see

him diet And then he looked at me and stepped back, after which he beckoned to some of his men to enter. When they had come he again addressed Juana, who had risen and stood swaying to and fro, as might one who has been dealt a heavy blow upon the head and half stunned.

"You may come with me now," he said to her, and then I stepped between them and faced him and again he stepped back a pace.

"She will not come with you now, or ever," I said, and my voice was very low-not above a whisper. "She is my woman-I have taken her!"

It was a lie-the last part, but what is a lie to a man who would commit murder in the same cause. He was among his men now-they were close around him and I suppose they gave him courage, for he addressed me threateningly.

"I do not care whose she is," he cried, "I want her and I shall have her. I speak for her now and I speak for her when she is a widow. After you are dead I have first choice of her and traitors do not live long."

"I am not dead yet," I reminded him. He turned to Juana.

"You shall have thirty days as the law requires; but you can save your friends trouble if you come now-they will not be molested then and I will see that their taxes are lowered."

Juana gave a little gasp and looked around at us and then she straightened her shoulders and came close to me.

"No!" she said to Or-tis. "I will never go. This is my man-he has taken me. Ask him if he will give me up to you. You will never have me-alive."

"Don't be too sure of that," he growled. "I believe that you are both lying to me, for I have had you watched and I know that you do not live under the same roof. And you!" he glared at me. "Tread carefully, for the eyes of the law find traitors where others do not see them." Then he turned and strode from the yard. A minute later they were gone in a cloud of dust.

Now our happiness and peace had fled-it was always thus-and there was no hope. I dared not look at Juana after what I had said; but then, had she not said the same thing? We all talked lamely for a few minutes and then father and mother rose to go and a moment later Jim and Mollie went indoors.

I turned to Juana. She stood with her eyes upon the ground and a pretty flush upon her cheek. Something surged up in me-a mighty force, that I had never known, possessed me, and before I realized what it impelled me to do I had seized Juana in my arms and was covering her face and lips with kisses.

She fought to free herself, but I would not let her go.

"You are mine!" I cried. "You are my woman. I have said it-you have said. You are my woman. God, how I love you!"

She lay quiet then and let me kiss her, and presently her arms stole about my neck and her lips sought mine in an interval that I had drawn them away and they moved upon my lips in a gentle caress that was yet palpitant with passion. This was a new Juana-a new and

very wonderful Juana.

"You really love me?" she asked at last. "I heard you say it!"

"I have loved you from the moment I saw you looking up at me from beneath the Hellhound," I replied.

"You have kept it very much of a secret to yourself then," she teased me. "If you loved me so, why did you not tell me? Were you going to keep it from me all my life, or were you afraid? Brother Or-tis was not afraid to say that he wanted me. Is my man less brave than he?"

I knew that she was only teasing me, and so I stopped her mouth with kisses and then: "Had you been a Hellhound, or Soor, or even Or-tis," I said, "I could have told you what I thought of you, but being Juana and a little girl the words would not come. I am a great coward."

We talked until it was time to go home to supper and I took her hand to lead her to my house. "But first," I said, "you must tell Mollie and Jim what has happened and that you will not be back. For a while we can live, under my father's roof, but as soon as may be I will get permission from the Teivos to take the adjoining land and work it and then I shall build a house." She drew back and flushed. "I cannot go with you yet," she said.

"What do you mean?" I asked. "You are mine!"

"We have not been married," she whispered.

"But no one is married," I reminded her. "Marriage is against the law."

"My mother was married," she told me. "You and I can be married. We have a church and a preacher. Why cannot he marry us? He is not ordained because there is none to ordain him; but being the head of the only church that he knows of or that we know of, it is evident that he can be ordained only by God and who knows but that He already has done so."

I tried to argue her out of it as now that Heaven was so near I had no mind to wait three weeks to attain it. But she would not argue-she just shook her head and at last saw that she was right and gave in-as I would have had to do in any event.

The next day I sought Orrin Colby and broached the subject to him. He was quite enthusiastic about it and wondered that they had never thought of it before. Of course, they had not because marriage had been obsolete for so many years that no one considered the ceremony necessary, nor, in fact, was it. Men and women were more often faithful to one another through life than otherwise-no amount of ceremony or ritual could make them more so. But if a woman wants it she should have it. And so it was arranged that at the next meeting Juana and I should be married.

The next three weeks were about the longest of my life and yet they were very, very happy weeks, for Juana and I were much together, as it had finally been decided that in order to carry out our statements to Or-tis she must come and live under our roof. She slept in the living room and I upon a pile of goat skins in the kitchen. If there were any spies watching us, and I know that there

were, they saw that we slept every night under the same roof.

Mother worked hard upon a new tunic and breeches for me, while Mollie helped Juana with her outfit. The poor child had come to us with only the clothes she wore upon her back; but even so, most of us had few changes-just enough to keep ourselves decently clean.

I went to Pthav, who was one of our representatives in the Teivos, and asked him to procure for me permission to work the vacant land adjoining my father's. The land all belonged to the community, but each man was allowed what he could work as long as there was plenty, and there was more than plenty for us all.

Pthav was very ugly-he seemed to have forgotten that I had saved his child's life-and said that he did not know what he could do for me, that I had acted very badly to General Or-tis and was in disfavor, beside being under suspicion in another matter.

"What has General Or-tis to do with the distribution of land by the Teivos?" I asked. "Because he wants my woman will the Teivos deny me my rights?"

I was no longer afraid of any of them and I spoke my mind as freely as I wished-almost. Of course, I did not care to give them the chance to bring me to trial as they most assuredly would have done had I really said to them all that was in my heart, but I stood up for my rights and demanded all that their rotten laws allowed me.

Pthav's woman came in while I was talking and recognized me, but she said nothing to me other than to mention that the child had asked for me. Pthav scowled at this and ordered her from the room, just as a man might order a beast around. It was nothing to me, though, as the woman was a renegade anyway.

Finally I demanded of Pthav that he obtain the concession for me unless he could give me some valid reason for refusing.

"I will ask it," he said finally, "but you will not get it-be sure of that."

I saw that it was useless and so I turned and left the room, wondering what I should do. Of course, we could remain under father's roof, but that did not seem right, as each man should make a home for himself. After father and mother died we would return to the old place, as father had after the death of my grandfather, but a young couple should start their life together alone and in their own way.

As I was leaving the house Pthav's woman stopped me. "I will do what I can for you," she whispered. She must have seen me draw away instinctively as from an unclean thing, for she flushed, and then said: "Please don't! I have suffered enough. I have paid the price of my treachery; but know, Yank," and she put her lips close to my ear, "that at heart I am more Yank than I was when I did this thing. And," she continued, "I have never spoken a word that could harm one of you. Tell them that-please tell them! I do not want them to hate me so, and, God of our Fathers! How I have suffered-the degradation, the humiliation.

It has been worse than what you are made to suffer. These creatures are lower than the beasts of the forest. I could kill him if I were not such a coward. I have seen, and I know how they can make one suffer before death."

I could not but feel sorry for her, and I told her so. The poor creature appeared very grateful, and assured me that she would aid me.

"I know a few things about Pthav that he would not want Or-tis to know," she said, "and even though he beats me for it I will make him get the land for you."

Again I thanked her, and departed, realizing that there were others worse off than we-that the closer one came to the Kalkars the more hideous life became.

At last the day came, and we set out for the church. As before I took Juana, though she tried to order it differently; but I would not trust her to the protection of another. We arrived without mishap-sixteen of us-and after the religious services were over, Juana and I stood before the altar, and were married-much after the fashion of the ancients, I imagine.

Juana was the only one of us who was at all sure about the ceremony, and it had been she who trained Orrin Colby-making him memorize so much that he said his head ached for a week. All I can recall of it is that he asked me if I would take her to be my lawfully wedded wife-I lost my voice, and only squeaked a weak yes-and that he pronounced us man and wife, and then something about not letting any one put asunder what God had joined together. I felt very much married, and very happy, and then just as it was all nicely over, and everybody was shaking hands with us, there came a loud knocking at the door, and the command: "Open, in the name of the law!"

We looked at one another and gasped. Orrin Colby put a finger to his lips for silence, and led the way toward the back of the church where a rough niche was built containing a few shelves upon which stood several rude candlesticks. We knew our parts, and followed him in silence, except one who went quickly about putting out the lights. All the time the pounding on the door became more insistent, and then we could hear the strokes of what must have been an ax beating at the panels. Finally a shot was fired through the heavy wood, and we knew it was the Kash Guard.

Taking hold of the lower shelf Orrin pulled upward with all his strength with the result that all the shelving and woodwork to which it was attached slid upward revealing an opening beyond. Through this we filed, one by one, down a flight of stone steps into a dark tunnel. When the last man had passed I lowered the shelving to its former place.

Then I turned, and followed the others, Juana's hand in mine. We groped our way for some little distance in the darkness of the tunnel until Orrin halted, and whispered to me to come to him. I went and stood at his side while he told me what I was to do. He had called upon me because I was the tallest, and the strongest of the men. Above us was a wooden trap. I was to lift this.

It had not been moved for generations, and was very heavy with earth, and growing things above; but I put my shoulders to it, and it had to give-either it or the ground beneath my feet, and that could not give. At last I had it off, and in a few minutes I had helped them all out into the midst of a dense wood. Again we knew our parts, for many times had we been coached for just such an emergency, and one by one the men scattered in different directions.

Suiting our movements to a prearranged plan, we reached our homes from different directions, and at different times, some arriving after sundown, to the end that were we watched none might be sure that we had been upon the same errand or to the same place.

CHAPTER VIII.

THE ARREST OF JULIAN 8TH

MOTHER HAD supper ready by the time Juana and I arrived. Father said they had seen nothing of the Kash Guard, nor had we; but we could guess at what had happened at the church. The door must finally have given it their blows. We could imagine their rage when they found that their prey had flown, leaving no trace. Even if they found the hidden tunnel, and we doubted that they had, the discovery would profit them but little. We were very sad, though, for we had lost our church. Never again in this generation could it be used. We added another mark to the growing score against Johansen.

The next morning as I was peddling milk to those who live about the market place, Old Samuels came out of his little cottage, and hailed me.

"A little milk this morning, Julian!" he cried, and when I carried my vessel over to him he asked me inside. His cottage was very small, and simply furnished as were all those that made any pretense to furniture of any sort, some having only a pile of rags or skins in one corner for a bed and perhaps a bench or two which answered the combined purposes of seats and table. In the yard behind his cottage he did his tanning, and there also was a little shed he called his shop where he fashioned various articles from the hides he tanned-belts, head bands, pouches, and the like.

He led me through the cottage, and out to his shed, and when we were there he looked through the windows to see that no one was near.

"I have something here," he said, "that I meant to bring to Juana for a wedding gift yesterday; but I am an old man, and forgetful, and so I left it behind. You can take it to her, though, with the best wishes of Old Samuels the Jew. It has been in my family since the Great War in which my people fought by the side of your people. One of my ancestors was wounded on a battlefield in France, and later nursed back to health by a Roman Catholic nurse, who gave him this token to carry away with him that he might not forget her. The story is that she loved him; but being a nun she could not marry. It has been handed down from father to son-it is my most prized possession, Julian; but being an old man, and the last of my line I wish it to go to those I love most dearly, for I doubt that

I have long to live. Again yesterday, I was followed from the church."

He turned to a little cupboard on the wall, and removing a false bottom took from the drawer beneath a small leather bag which he handed to me.

"Look at it," he said, "and then slip it inside your shirt so that none may know that you have it."

Opening the bag I brought forth a tiny image carved from what appeared to be very hard bona—the figure of a man nailed to a cross-a man with a wreath of thorns about his head. It was a very wonderful piece of work-I had never seen anything like it in my life.

"It is very beautiful," I said. "Juana will be thankful, indeed."

"Do you know what it is?" he asked, and I had to admit that I did not.

"It is the figure of the Son of God upon the cross," he explained, "and it is carved from the tusk of an elephant. Juana will-" But he got no farther. "Quick!" he whispered, "hide it. Someone comes!"

I slipped the little figure inside my shirt just as several men crossed from Samuels's cottage to his shop. They came directly to the door, and then we saw that they were Kash Guards. A captain commanded them. He was one of the officers who had come with Or-tis, and I did not know him.

He looked first at me and then at Samuels, finally addressing the latter.

"From the description," he said, "you are the man I want-you are Samuels the Jew?"

Moses nodded affirmatively.

"I have been sent to question you," said the officer, "and if you know when you are well off you will tell me nothing but the truth, and all of that."

Moses made no reply-he just stood there, a little, dried-up old man who seemed to have shrunk to even smaller proportions in the brief moments since the officer had entered. Then the latter turned to me, and looked me over from head to foot.

"Who are you, and what do you here?" he asked.

"I am Julian 9th," I replied. "I was peddling milk when I stopped in to speak with my friend."

"You should be more careful of your friends, young man," he snapped. "I had intended letting you go about your business; but now that you say you are a friend of his we will just keep you, too. Possibly you can help us."

I didn't know what he wanted; but I knew that whatever it was he would get precious little help from Julian 9th. He turned to Moses.

"Do not lie to me! You went to a forbidden meeting yesterday to worship some god, and plot against the Teivos. Four weeks ago you went to the same place. Who else was there yesterday?"

Samuels looked the captain straight in the eye, and remained silent.

"Answer me, you dirty Jew!" yelled the officer, "or I will find a way to make you. Who was there with you?"

"I will not answer," said Samuels.

The captain turned to a sergeant standing behind him. "Give him the first reason why he should answer," he di-

rected.

The sergeant, who carried his bayonet fixed to his rifle, lowered the, point until it rested against Samuels's leg, and with a sudden jab ran it into the flesh. The old man cried out in pain, and staggered back against his little bench. I sprang forward, white with rage, and seizing the sergeant by the collar of his loose tunic hurled him across the shop. It was all done in less than a second, and then I found myself facing as many loaded rifles as could crowd into the little doorway. The captain had drawn his pistol, and levelled it at my head.

They bound me, and sat me in a corner of the shop, and they were none too gentle in the way they did it, either. The captain was furious, and would have had me shot on the spot had not the sergeant whispered something to him. As it was he ordered the latter to search us both for weapons, and when they did so they discovered the little image on my person. At sight of it a sneer of triumph curled the lip of the officer.

"So-ho!" he exclaimed. "Here is evidence enough. Now we know one at least who worships forbidden gods, and plots against the laws of his land!"

"It is not his," said Samuels. "It is mine. He does not even know what it is. I was showing it to him when we heard you coming, and I told him to hide it in his shirt. It is just a curious relic that I was showing him."

"Then you are the worshiper after all," said the captain.

Old Samuels smiled a crooked smile. "Who ever heard of a Jew worshiping Christ?" he asked.

The officer looked at him sharply. "That is right," he admitted, "you would not worship Christ; but you have been worshiping something-it is all the same-they are all alike. This for all of them," and he hurled the image to the earthern floor, and ground it, in broken fragments, into the dirt with his heel.

Old Samuels went very white then, and his eyes stared wide and round; but he held his tongue. Then they started in on him again, asking him to name those who were with him the day before, and each time they asked him they prodded him with a bayonet until his poor old body streamed blood from a dozen cruel wounds. But he would not give them a single name, and then the officer ordered that a fire be built and a bayonet heated.

"Sometimes hot steel is better than cold," he said. "You had better tell me the truth."

"I will tell you nothing," moaned Samuels in a weak voice. "You may kill me; but you will learn nothing from me."

"But you have never felt red-hot steel before," the captain taunted him. "It has wrung the secrets from stouter hearts than that in the filthy carcass of a dirty old Jew. Come now, save yourself the agony, and tell me who was there, for in the end you will tell."

But the old man would not tell, and then they did the hideous thing that they had threatened-with red-hot steel they burned him after tying him to his bench.

His cries and moans were piteous-it seemed to me that they must have soft-

ened stone to compassion; but the hearts of those beasts were harder than stone.

He suffered! God of our Fathers! how he suffered; but they could not force him to tell. At last he lost consciousness and then the brute in the uniform of captain, rageful that he failed, crossed the room, and struck the poor, unconscious old man a heavy blow in the face.

After that it was my turn. He came to me.

"Tell me what you know, pig of a Yank!" he cried.

"As he died, so can I die," I said, for I thought that Samuels was dead.

"You will tell," he shrieked, almost insane with rage. "You will tell or your eyes will be burned from their sockets." He called the fiend with the bayonet-now white hot it seemed, so terrifically it glowed.

As the fellow approached me the horror of the thing they would do to me seared my brain with an anguish almost as poignant as that which the hot iron could inflict on flesh. I had struggled to free myself of my bonds while they tortured Samuels, that I might go to his aid; but I had failed. Yet, now, scarcely without realizing that I exerted myself, I rose, and the cords snapped. I saw them step back in amazement as I stood there confronting them.

"Go," I said to them. "Go before I kill you all. Even the Teivos, rotten as it is, will not stand for this usurpation of its authority. You have no right to inflict punishment. You have gone too far."

The sergeant whispered for a moment to his superior, who finally appeared to assent grudgingly to some proposition of the others and then turned, and left the little shop.

"We have no proof against you," said the sergeant to me. "We had no intention of harming you. All that we wanted was to frighten the truth out of you; but as to that," and he jerked a thumb toward Samuels, "we have the proof on him, and what we did we did under orders. Keep a still tongue in your head or it will be the worse for you, and thank the star under which you were born that you did not get worse than he."

Then he left, too, and took the soldiers with him. I saw them pass into the rear doorway of Samuels's cottage, and a moment later I heard their horses' hoofs pounding on the surface of the market place. I could scarcely believe that I had escaped. Then I did not know the reason for it; but that I was to learn later, and that it was not so much of a miracle after all.

I went right to poor old Samuels. He was still breathing, but unconscious-mercifully so. The withered old body was hideously burned, and mutilated, and one eye-but why describe their ghoulish world I carried him into his cottage, and laid him on his cot, and then I found some flour, and covered his burns with it-that was all I knew to do for him. There were no doctors such as the ancients had, for there were no longer places of learning in which they could be trained. There were those who claimed to be able to heal. They gave herbs and strange concoctions; but as their patients usually died immediately

we had little confidence in them.

After I had put the flour on his wounds, I drew up a bench, and sat down beside him so that when he regained consciousness he would find a friend there to wait upon him. As I sat there looking at him he died. Tears came to my eyes in spite of all that I could do, for friends are few, and I had loved this old Jew, as we all did who knew him. He had been a gentle character, loyal to his friends, and inclined to be a little too forgiving to his enemies-even the Kalkars. That he was courageous his death proved.

I put another mark against the score of Peter Johansen.

The following day, father, Jim, and I buried old Samuels, the authorities came and took all his poor little possessions, and his cottage was turned over to another. But I had one thing, his most prized possession, that they did not get, for before I left him after he died, I went back into his shop, and gathered up the fragments of the man upon the cross, and put them into the little leather bag in which he had kept them.

When I gave them to Juana, and told her the story of them she wept and kissed them, and with some glue such as we make from the hides and tendons of goats we mended it so it was difficult to tell where it had broken. After it was dry Juana wore it in its little bag about her neck, beneath her clothing.

A week after the death of Samuels, Pthav sent for me, and very gruffly told me that the Teivos had issued a permit for me to use the land adjoining that allotted to my father. As before, his woman stopped me as I was leaving.

"It was easier than I thought," she told me, "for Or-tis has angered the Teivos by attempting to usurp all its powers, and knowing that he hates you they were glad to grant your petition over his objections."

I had heard rumors lately of the growing differences between Or-tis and the Teivos, and had learned that it was these that had saved me from the Kash Guard that day-the sergeant having warned his superior that should they maltreat me without good and sufficient reason the Teivos could take advantage of the fact to discipline the Guard and they were not yet ready for the test-that was to come later.

During the next two or three months I was busy building our home and getting my place in order. I had decided to raise horses and obtained permission from the Teivos to do so-again over Or-tis's objections. Of course, the government controlled the entire horse traffic; but there were a few skilled horsemen permitted to raise them, though at any time their herds could be commandeered by the authorities. I knew that it might not be a very profitable business, but I loved horses and wanted to have just a few-a stallion and two or three mares. These I could use in tilling my fields and in the heavier work of hauling and at the same time I would keep a few goats, pigs and chickens to insure us a living.

Father gave me half his goats and a few chickens and from Jim I bought two

young sows and a boar. Later I traded a few goats to the Teivos for two old mares that they thought were no longer worth keeping, and that same day I was told of a stallion-a young outlaw-that Hoffmeyer had. The beast was five years old and so vicious that none dared approach him and they were on the point of destroying him.

I went to Hoffmeyer and asked if I could buy the animal-I offered him a goat for it, which he was glad to accept, and then I took a strong rope and went to get my property. I found a beautiful bay with the temper of a Hellhound. When I attempted to enter the pen he rushed at me with ears back and jaws distended, but I knew that I must conquer him now or never, and so I met him with only a rope in my hand, nor did I wait for him. Instead, I ran to meet him and when he was in reach I struck him once across the face with the rope, at which he wheeled and let both hind feet fly out at me. Then I cast the noose that was at one end of the rope and caught him about the neck and for half an hour we had a battle of it.

I never struck him unless he tried to bite or strike me and finally I must have convinced him that I was master, for he let me come close enough to stroke his glossy neck, though he snorted loudly all the while that I did so. When I had quieted him a bit I managed to get a half hitch around his lower jaw, and after that I had no difficulty in leading him from the pen. Once in the open I took the coils of my rope in my left hand and before the creature knew what I was about had vaulted to his back.

He fought fair, I'll say that for him, for he stood on his feet but for fifteen minutes he brought into play every artifice known to horse-kind for unseating a rider. Only my skill and my great strength kept me on his back and at that even the Kalkars who were looking on had to applaud.

After that it was easy. I treated him with kindness, something he had never known before, and as he was an unusually intelligent animal, he soon learned that I was not only his master, but his friend. From being an outlaw he became one of the kindest and most tractable animals I have ever seen, so much so, in fact, that Juana used to ride him bareback.

I love all horses and always have, but I think I never loved any animal as I did Red Lightning, as we named him.

The authorities left us pretty well alone for some time because they were quarreling among themselves. Jim said there was an ancient saying about honest men getting a little peace when thieves fell out and it certainly fitted our case perfectly. But the peace didn't last forever, and when it broke the bolt that fell was the worst calamity that had ever come to us.

One evening father was arrested for trading at night and taken away by the Kash Guard. They got him as he was returning to the house from the goat pens and would not even permit him to bid good-bye to mother. Juana and I were eating supper in our own house about three hundred yards away and never knew anything about it until mother

came running over to tell us. She said that it was all done so quickly that they had father and were gone before she could run from the house to where they arrested him. They had a spare horse and hustled him onto it-then they galloped away toward the lake front. It seems strange that neither Juana nor I heard the hoof beats of the horses, but we did not.

I went immediately to Pthav and demanded to know why father had been arrested, but he professed ignorance of the whole affair. I had ridden to his place on Red Lightning and from there I started to the Kash Guard barracks where the military prison is. It was contrary to law to approach the barracks after sunset without permission, so I left Red Lightning in the shadow of some ruins a hundred yards away and started on foot toward that part of the post, where I knew the prison to be located. It consisted of a high stockade around the inside of which were rude shelters. Upon the roofs of these armed guards patrolled. The center of the rectangle was an open court where the prisoners exercised, cooked their food and washed their clothing-if they cared to. There were seldom more than fifty confined there at a time, as it was only a detention camp to hold those awaiting trial and those sentenced to the mines. The latter were usually taken away when there were from twenty-five to forty of them.

They marched them in front of mounted guards a distance of about fifty miles to the nearest mines, which lie southwest of our Teivos, driving them, like cattle, with heavy whips of bullhide. To such great cruelty were they subjected, so escaped convicts told us that always at least one out of every ten died upon the march.

Though men were sometimes sentenced for as short terms as five years in the mines, none ever returned, other than the few who escaped, so harshly were they treated and so poorly fed. They labored twelve hours a day.

I managed to reach the shadow of the wall of the stockade without being seen, for the Kash Guard was a lazy, inefficient, insubordinate soldier. He did as he pleased, though I understand that under Jarth's regime an effort was made to force discipline as he was attempting to institute a military oligarchy. Since Or-tis came they had been trying to revive the ancient military salute and the use of titles instead of the usual "Brother."

After I reached the stockade I was at a loss to communicate with my father, since any noise I might make would doubtless attract the attention of the guard. Finally through a crack between two boards, I attracted the attention of a prisoner. The man came close to the stockade and I whispered to him that I wished to speak to Julian 8th. By luck I had happened upon a decent fellow, and it was not long before he had brought father and I was talking with him in low whispers.

He told me that he had been arrested for trading by night and that he was to be tried on the morrow. I asked him if he would like to escape-that I

would find the means if he wished me to, but he said that he was innocent of the charge as he had not been off our farm at night for months and that doubtless it was a case of mistaken identity and that he would be freed in the morning.

I had my doubts, but he would not listen to escape as he argued that it would prove his guilt and they would have him for sure.

"Where is there that I may go," he asked, "if I escape? I might hide in the woods, but what a life! I could never return to your mother and so sure am I that they can prove nothing against me that I would rather stand trial than face the future as an outlaw."

I think now that he refused my offer of assistance not because he expected to be released, but because he feared that evil might befall me were I to connive at his escape. At any rate, I did nothing, since he would not let me, and went home again with a heavy heart and dismal forebodings.

Trials before the Teivos were public, or at least were supposed to be, though they made it so uncomfortable for spectators that few, if any, had the temerity to attend. But under Jarth's new rule the proceedings of the military courts were secret and father was tried before such a court.

CHAPTER IX.

I HORSEWHIP AN OFFICER

WE PASSED days of mental anguish-hearing nothing, knowing nothing-and then one evening a single Kash Guard rode up to father's house. Juana and I were there with mother. The fellow dismounted and knocked at the door-a most unusual courtesy from one of these. He entered at my bidding and stood there a moment looking at mother. He was only a lad-a big, overgrown boy, and there was neither cruelty in his eyes nor the mark of the beast in any of his features. His mother's blood evidently predominated, and he was unquestionably not all Kalkar. Presently he spoke.

"Which is Julian 8th's woman?" he asked; but he looked at mother as though he already guessed.

"I am," said mother.

The lad shuffled his feet and caught his breath-it was like a stifled sob.

"I am sorry," he said, "that I bring you such sad news." Then we guessed that the worst had happened.

"The mines?" mother asked him, and he nodded affirmatively.

"Ten years!" he exclaimed, as one might announce a sentence of death, for such it was. "He never had a chance," he volunteered. "It was a terrible thing. They are beasts!"

I could not but show my surprise that a Kash Guard should speak so of his own kind, and he must have seen it in my face.

"We are not all beasts," he hastened to exclaim.

I commenced to question him then and I found that he had been a sentry at the door during the trial and had heard it all. There had been but one witness-the man who had informed on father, and father had been given no chance to make any defense.

I asked him who the informer was.

"I am not sure of the man," he replied; "he was a tall, stoop-shouldered man. I think I heard him called Peter."

But I had known even before I asked. I looked at mother and saw that she was dry-eyed and that her mouth had suddenly hardened into a firmness of expression such as I had never dreamed it could assume.

"Is that all?" she asked.

"No," replied the youth, "it is not. I am instructed to notify you that you have thirty days to take another man or vacate these premises," and then he took a step toward mother.

"I am sorry, madam," he said. "It is very cruel; but what are we to do? It becomes worse each day. Now they are grinding down even the Kash Guard, so that there are many of us who-" but he stopped suddenly as though realizing that he was on the point of speaking treason to strangers, and turning on his heel, he quit the house and a moment later was galloping away.

I expected mother to break down then; but she did not. She was very brave; but there was a new and terrible expression in her eyes-those eyes that had shone forth always with love. Now they were bitter, hate-filled eyes. She did not weep-I wish to God she had-instead, she did that which I had never known her to do before-she laughed aloud. Upon the slightest pretext, or upon no pretext at all, she laughed. We were afraid for her.

The suggestion dropped by the Kash Guard started in my mind a train of thought of which I spoke to mother and Juana, and after that mother seemed more normal for a while, as though I had aroused hope, however feeble, where there had been no hope before. I pointed out that if the Kash Guard was dissatisfied the time was ripe for revolution, for if we could get only a part of them to join us, there would surely be enough of us to overthrow those who remained loyal. Then we would liberate all prisoners and set up a republic of our own such as the ancients had had.

God of our fathers! How many times-how many thousand times had I heard that plan discussed and re-discussed! We would slay all the Kalkars in the world, and we would sell the land again that men might have pride of ownership and an incentive to labor hard and develop it for their children, for well we knew by long experience that no man will develop land that reverts to the government at death, or that government may take away from him at any moment. We would encourage manufactures; we would build schools and churches; we would have music and dancing; once again we would live as our fathers had lived.

We looked for no perfect form of government, for we realized that perfection is beyond the reach of mortal men-merely would we go back to the happy days of our ancestors.

It took time to develop my plan. I talked with every one I could trust and found them all willing to join me when we had enough. In the meantime, I cared for my own place and father's as well-I was very busy and time flew rap-

idly.

About a month after father was taken away I came home one day with Juana who had accompanied me up river in search of a goat that had strayed. We had found its carcass, or rather its bones, where the Hellhounds had left them. Mother was not at our house, where she now spent most of her time, so I went over to father's to get her. As I approached the door I heard sounds of an altercation and scuffling that made me cover the few remaining yards at a rapid run.

Without waiting to knock, as mother had taught me always to do, I burst into the living room to discover mother in the clutches of Peter Johansen. She was trying to fight him off; but he was a large and powerful man. He heard me just as I leaped for him and, turning, grappled with me. He tried to hold me off with one hand then while he drew his knife; but I struck him in the face with one fist and knocked him from me, away across the room. He was up again in an instant, bleeding from nose and mouth, and came back at me with his knife in his hand, slashing furiously. Again I struck him and knocked him down and when he arose and came again, I seized his knife hand and tore the weapon from him. He had no slightest chance against me, and he saw it soon, for he commenced to back away and beg for mercy.

"Kill him, Julian," said mother. "Kill the murderer of your father."

I did not need her appeal to influence me, for the moment that I had seen Peter there I know my long awaited time had come to kill him. He commenced to cry then-great tears ran down his cheeks and he bolted for the door and tried to escape. It was my pleasure to play with him as a cat plays with a mouse.

I kept him from the door, seizing him and hurling him bodily across the room. Then I let him reach the window, through which he tried to crawl. I permitted him to get so far that he thought he was about to escape and then I seized him again and dragged him back to the floor, and lifting him to his feet I made him fight.

I struck him lightly in the face many times and then I laid him on his back across the table, and kneeling on his chest, I spoke to him softly.

"You had my friend, old Samuels, murdered, and my father, too, and now you come to attack my mother. What did you expect, swine; but this? Have you no intelligence? You must have known that I would kill you-speak!"

"They said that they would get you today," he whimpered. "They lied to me. They went back on me. They told me that you would be in the pen at the barracks before noon. Damn them, they lied to me!"

So! That was how it was, eh? And the lucky circumstance of the strayed goat had saved me to avenge my father and succor my mother; but they would come yet. I must hurry or they might come before I was through. So I took his head between my hands and bent his neck far back over the edge of the table until I

heard his spine part, and that was the end of the vilest traitor who ever lived-one who professed friendship openly and secretly conspired to ruin us. In broad daylight I carried his body to the river and threw it in. I was past caring what they knew. They were coming for me and they would have their way with me whether they had any pretext or not. But they would have to pay a price for me, that I determined, and I got my knife and strapped it in its scabbard about my waist beneath my shirt. But they did not come-they had lied to Peter just as they lie to everyone.

The next day was market day and tax day, so I went to market with the necessary goats and produce to make my trades and pay my taxes. As Soor passed around the market place making his collections, or rather his levies, for we had to deliver the stuff to his place ourselves, I saw from the excited conversation of those in his wake that he was spreading consternation among the people of the commune.

I wondered what it might all be about, nor had I long to wait to discover, for he soon reached me. He could neither read nor write; but he had a form furnished by the government upon which were numbers that the agents were taught how to read and which stood for various classes of produce, live-stock and manufactures. In columns beneath these numbers he made marks during the month for the amounts of my trades in each item-it was all crude, of course, and inaccurate; but as they always overcharged us and then added something to make up for any errors they might have made to our credit, the government was satisfied even if we were not.

Being able to read and write as well as to figure, I always knew to a dot just what was due from me in tax, and I always had an argument with Soor, from which government emerged victorious every time.

This month I should have owed him one goat; but he demanded three.

"How is that?" I asked.

"Under the old rate you owed me the equivalent of a goat and a half; but since the tax has been doubled under the new law, you owe me three goats." Then it was I knew the cause of the excitement in other parts of the market place.

"How do you expect us to live if you take everything from us?" I asked.

"The government does not care whether you live or not," he replied, "as long as you pay taxes while you do live."

"I will pay the three goats," I said, "because I have to; but next market day I will bring you a present of the hardest cheese I can find."

He did not say anything, for he was afraid of me unless he was surrounded by Kash Guards, but he looked mighty ugly. After he had passed along to the next victim I walked over to where a number of men were evidently discussing the new tax. There were some fifteen or twenty of them, mostly Yanks, and they were angry-I could see that before I came close enough to hear what they were saying. When I joined them one asked me what I thought of this new outrage.

"Think of it!" I exclaimed. "I think what I have always thought-that as long as we submit without a murmur they will continue to increase our burden, that is already more than we can stagger under."

"They have taken even my seed beans," said one, who raised beans almost exclusively. "As you all know, last year's crop was small and beans brought a high price, so they taxed me on my trades at the high price and then collected the tax in beans at the low price of the previous year. They have been doing that all this year; but I hoped to save enough for seed until now they have doubled the tax I know that I shall have no beans to plant next year."

"What can we do about it?" asked another hopelessly. "What can we do about it?"

"We can refuse to pay the tax," I replied.

They looked at me much as men would look at one who said: "If you do not like it, you may commit suicide."

"The Kash Guard would collect the tax and it would be heavier still, for they would kill us and take our women and all that we possess," said one.

"We outnumber them," said I.

"But we cannot face rifles with our bare hands."

"It has been done," I insisted, "and it is better to die like men, facing the bullets, than by starvation like spineless worms. We are a hundred, yes, a thousand to their one, and we have our knives, and there are pitchforks and axes, besides the clubs that we can gather. God of our Fathers! I would rather die thus, red with the blood of these swine, than live as they compel us to live!"

I saw some of them looking about to see who might have heard me, for I had raised my voice in excitement; but there were a few who looked steadily at me and nodded their heads in approval.

"If we can get enough to join us, let us do it!" cried one.

"We have only to start," I said, "and they will flock to us."

"How should we start?" asked another.

"I should start on Soor," I replied. "I should kill him and Pthav and Hoffmeyer first, and then make a round of the Kalkar houses where we can find rifles, possibly, and kill them all as we go. By the time the Kash Guard learns of it and can come in force, we shall have a large following. If we can overcome them and take their barracks we shall be too strong for any but a large force, and it will take a month to get many soldiers here from the East. Many of the Kash Guard will join us-they are dissatisfied-one of their number told me so. It will be easy if we are but brave."

They commenced to take a great interest and there was even a cry of "Down with the Kalkars!" but I stopped that in a hurry, as our greatest hope of success lay in a surprise attack.

"When shall we start?" they asked.

"Now," I replied, "if we take them unaware, we shall be successful at first, and with success others will join us. Only by numbers, overwhelming num-

bers, may we succeed."

"Good!" they cried. "Come! Where first?"

"Soor," I said. "He is at the far end of the market place. We will kill him first and hang his head on a pole. We will carry it with us and as we kill we will place each head upon a pole and take it with us. Thus we will inspire others to follow us and put fear in the hearts of our enemies."

"Lead on, Julian 9th!" they cried. "We will follow!"

I turned and started in the direction of Soor and we had covered about half the distance when a company of Kash Guard rode into the market place at the very point where Soor was working.

You should have seen my army. Like mist before a hot sun it disappeared from view, leaving me standing all alone in the center of the market place.

The commander of the Kash Guard company must have noticed the crowd and its sudden dispersion, for he rode straight toward me, alone. I would not give him the satisfaction of thinking that I feared him and so I stood there waiting. My thoughts were of the saddest-not for myself, but for the sorry pass to which the Kalkar system had brought Americanism. These men who had deserted me would have been in happier days the flower of American manhood; but generations of oppression and servitude had turned their blood to water. To-day they turned tail and fled before a handful of half armed, poorly disciplined soldiers. The terror of the lunar fallacy had entered their hearts and rotted them.

The officer reined in before me and then it was that I recognized him-the beast who had tortured and murdered old Samuels.

"What are you doing here?" he barked.

"Minding my own business, as you had better do," I replied.

"You swine are becoming insufferable," he cried. "Get to your pen, where you belong-I will stand for no mobs and no insolence."

I just stood there looking at him; but there was murder in my heart. He loosened the bull-hide whip that hung at the pommel of his saddle.

"You have to be driven, do you?" He was livid with sudden anger and his voice almost a scream. Then he struck at me-a vicious blow with the heavy whip-struck at my face. I dodged the lash and seized it, wrenching it from his puny grasp. Then I caught his bridle and though his horse plunged and fought I lashed the rider with all my strength a dozen times before he tumbled from the saddle to the trampled earth of the market place.

Then his men were upon me and I went down from a blow on the head. They bound my hands while I was unconscious and then hustled me roughly into a saddle. I was half dazed during the awful ride that ensued-we rode to the military prison at the barracks and all the way that fiend of a captain rode beside me and lashed me with his bullhide whip.

CHAPTER X.
REVOLUTION

THEN THEY threw me into the pen where the prisoners were kept and after they had left I was surrounded by the other unfortunates incarcerated there. When they learned what I had done they shook their heads and sighed. It would be all over with me in the morning, they said-nothing less than the butcher for such an offense as mine.

I lay upon the hard ground, bruised and sore, thinking not of my future but of what was to befall Juana and mother if I, too, were taken from them. The thought gave me new strength and made me forget my hurts, for my mind was busy with plans, mostly impossible plans, for escape-and vengeance. Vengeance was often uppermost in my mind.

Above my head, at intervals, I heard the pacing of the sentry upon the roof. I could tell, of course, each time that he passed and the direction in which he was going. It required about five minutes for him to pass above me, reach the end of his post and return-that was when he went west. Going east he took but a trifle over two minutes. Therefore, when he passed me going west his back was toward me for about two and a half minutes; but when he went east it was only for about a minute that his face was turned from the spot where I lay.

Of course, he could not see me while I lay beneath the shed; but my plan-the one I finally decided upon-did not include remaining in the shed. I had evolved several subtle schemes for escape; but finally cast them all aside and chose, instead, the boldest that occurred to me. I knew that at best the chances were small that I could succeed in my plan and therefore the boldest seemed as likely as any other and it at least had the advantage of speedy results. I would be free or I would be dead in a few brief moments after I essayed it.

I waited, therefore, until the other prisoners had quieted down and comparative silence in the direction of the barracks and the parade assured me that there were few abroad. The sentry came and went and came again upon his monotonous round. Now he was coming toward me from the east and I was ready, standing just outside the shed beneath the low eaves which I could reach by jumping. I heard him pass and gave him a full minute to gain the distance I thought necessary to drown the sounds of my attempt from his ears. Then I leaped for the eaves, caught with my fingers and drew myself quickly to the roof.

I thought that I did it very quietly, but the fellow must have had the ears of a Hellhound for no more had I drawn my feet beneath me for the quick run across the roof than a challenge rang out from the direction of the sentry and almost simultaneously the report of a rifle.

Instantly all was pandemonium. Guards ran, shouting, from all directions, lights flashed in the barracks, rifles spoke from either side of me and from behind me, while from below rose the dismal howlings of the prisoners. It seemed then that a hundred men had

known of my plan and been lying in wait for me; but I was launched upon it and even though I had regretted it, there was nothing to do but carry it through to whatever was its allotted end.

It seemed a miracle that none of the bullets struck me; but, of course, it was dark and I was moving rapidly. It takes seconds to tell about it; but it required less than a second for me to dash across the roof and leap to the open ground beyond the prison pen. I saw lights moving west of me and so I ran east toward the lake and presently the firing ceased as they lost sight of me, though I could hear sounds of pursuit. Nevertheless, I felt that I had succeeded and was congratulating myself upon the ease with which I had accomplished the seemingly impossible when there suddenly rose before me out of the black night the figure of a huge soldier pointing a rifle point blank at me. He issued no challenge nor asked any question-just pulled the trigger. I could hear the hammer strike the firing pin; but there was no explosion. I did not know what the reason was, nor did I ever know. All that was apparent was that the rifle misfired and then he brought his bayonet into play while I was springing toward him.

Foolish man! But then he did not know that it was Julian 9th he faced. Pitifully, futilely he thrust at me and with one hand I seized the rifle and tore it from his grasp. In the same movement I swung it behind me and above my head, bringing it down with all the strength of one arm upon his thick skull. Like a felled ox he tumbled to his knees and then sprawled forward upon his face. He never knew how he died.

Behind me I heard them coming closer and they must have seen me, for they opened fire again and I heard the beat of horses' hoofs upon my right and left. They were surrounding me upon three sides and upon the fourth was the great lake. A moment later I was standing upon the edge of the ancient breakwater while behind me rose the triumphant cries of my pursuers. They had seen me and they knew that I was theirs.

At least, they thought they knew so. I did not wait for them to come closer; but raising my hands above me I dove head foremost into the cool waters of the lake. Swimming rapidly beneath the surface I kept close in the shadows and headed north.

I had spent much of my summer life in the water of the river so that I was much at home in that liquid element as in air, but this, of course, the Kash Guard did not know, for even had they known that Julian 9th could swim they could not at that time have known which prisoner it was who had escaped and so I think they must have thought what I wanted them to think-that I had chosen self-drowning to recapture.

However, I was sure they would search the shore in both directions and so I kept to the water after I came to the surface. I swam farther out until I felt there was little danger of being seen from shore, for it was a dark night. And thus I swam on until I thought I was opposite the mouth of the river when I turned toward the west, searching for it.

Luck was with me. I swam directly

into it and a short distance up the sluggish stream before I knew that I was out of the lake; but even then I did not take to the shore, preferring to pass the heart of the ancient city before trusting myself to land.

At last I came out upon the north bank of the river, which is farthest from the Kash Guard barracks, and made my way as swiftly as possible up stream in the direction of my home. Here, hours later, I found an anxious Juana awaiting me, for already she had heard what had transpired in the market place. I had made my plans and had soon explained them to Juana and mother. There was nothing for them but to acquiesce, as only death could be our lot if we remained in our homes another day. I was astonished, even, that they had not already fallen upon Juana and mother. As it was they might come any minute. There was no time to lose.

Hastily wrapping up a few belongings I took the Flag from its hiding place above the mantel and tucked it in my shirt-then we were ready. Going to the pens we caught Red Lightning and the two mares and three of my best milk goats. These latter we tied and after Juana and mother had mounted the mares I laid one goat in front of each across a mare's withers and the third before myself upon Red Lightning, who did not relish the strange burden and gave me considerable trouble at first.

We rode out up river, leaving the pens open that the goats might scatter and possibly cover our trail until we could turn off the dusty path beyond Jim's house. We dared not stop to bid Jim and Mollie good-by lest we be apprehended there by our enemies and bring trouble to our good friends. It was a sad occasion for poor mother, leaving thus her home and those dear neighbors who had been as close to her as her own; but she was as brave as Juana.

Not once did either of them attempt to dissuade me from the wild scheme I had outlined to them. Instead, they encouraged me and Juana laid her hand upon my arm as I rode beside her, saying: "I would rather that you died thus than that we lived on as downtrodden serfs, without happiness and without hope."

"I shall not die," I said, "until my work is done, at least. Then if die I must I shall be content to know that I leave a happier country for my fellow men to live in."

"Amen!" whispered Juana.

That night I hid them in the ruins of the old church, which we found had been partially burned by the Kalkars. For a moment I held them in my arms-my mother, and my wife-and then I left them to ride toward the southwest and the coal mines. The mines lie about fifty miles away and west of south according to what I had heard. I had never been to them; but I knew that I must find the bed of an ancient canal and follow it through the district of Joliet and between fifteen and twenty miles beyond, where I must turn south and, after passing a large lake, I would presently come to the mines. I rode the balance of the night and into the morning until I commenced to see people astir in the thinly popu-

lated country through which I passed.

Then I hid in a wood through which a stream wound and here, found pasture for Red Lightning and rest for myself. I had brought no food, leaving what little bread and cheese we had brought from the house for mother and Juana. I did not expect to be gone over a week and I knew that with goat's milk and what they had on hand in addition to what they could find growing wild, there would be no danger of starvation before I returned-after which we expected to live in peace and plenty for the rest of our days.

My journey was less eventful than I had anticipated. I passed through a few ruined villages and towns of greater or less antiquity, the largest of which was ancient Joliet, which was abandoned during the plague fifty years ago, the Teivos headquarters and station being removed directly west a few miles to the banks of a little river. Much of the territory I traversed was covered with thick woods, though here and there were the remnants of clearings which were not yet entirely reclaimed by nature. Now and again I passed those gaunt and lonely towers in which the ancients stored the winter feed for their stock. Those that have endured were of concrete and some showed but little the ravages of time, other than the dense vines that often covered them from base to capital, while several were in the midst of thick forests with old trees almost entwining them, so quickly does Nature reclaim her own when man has been displaced.

After I passed Joliet I had to make inquiries. This I did boldly of the few men I saw laboring in the tiny fields scattered along my way. They were poor clods, these descendants of ancient America's rich and powerful farming class.

Early in the second morning I came within sight of the stockade about the mines. Even at a distance I could see that it was a weak, dilapidated thing and that the sentries pacing along its top were all that held the prisoners within.

As a matter of fact, many escaped; but they were soon hunted down and killed as the farmers in the neighborhood always informed on them. The commandant at the prison had conceived the fiendish plan of slaying one farmer for every prisoner who escaped and was not recaught.

I hid until night and then, cautiously, I approached the stockade, leaving Red Lightning securely tied in the woods. It was no trick to reach the stockade, so thoroughly was I hidden by the rank vegetation growing upon the outside. From a place of concealment I watched the sentry, a big fellow; but apparently a dull clod who walked with his chin upon his breast and with the appearance of being half asleep.

The stockade was not high and the whole construction was similar to that of the prison pen at Chicago, evidently having been designed by the same commandant in years gone by. I could hear the prisoners conversing in the shed beyond the wall and presently when one came near to where I listened I tried to attract his attention by making

a hissing sound.

After what seemed a long time to me, he heard me; but even then it was some time before he appeared to grasp the idea that some one was trying to attract his attention. When he did he moved closer and tried to peer through one of the cracks; but as it was dark out he could see nothing.

"Are you a Yank?" I asked. "If you are I am a friend."

"I am a Yank," he replied. "Did you expect to find a Kalkar working in the mines?"

"Do you know a prisoner called Julian 8th?" I inquired.

He seemed to be thinking for a moment and then he said: "I seem to have heard the name. What do you want of him?"

"I wait to speak to him-I am his son."

"Wait!" he whispered. "I think that I heard a man speak that name to-day. I will find out-he is near by."

I waited for perhaps ten minutes when I heard some one approaching from the inside and presently a voice asked if I was still there.

"Yes," I said. "Is that you, father?" for I thought that the tones were his.

"Julian, my son!" came to me almost as a sob. "What are you doing here?"

Briefly I told him and then of my plan. "Have the convicts the courage to attempt it?" I asked, in conclusion.

"I do not know," he said, and I could not but note the tone of utter hopelessness in his voice. "They would wish to; but here our spirits and our bodies both are broken. I do not know how many would have the courage to attempt it. Wait and I will talk with some of them-all are loyal; but just weak from overwork, starvation and abuse."

I waited for the better part of an hour before he returned. "Some will help," he said, "from the first, and others if we are successful. Do you think it worth the risk-they will kill you if you fail-they will kill us all."

"And what is death to that which you are suffering?" I asked.

"I know," he said, "but the worm impaled upon the hook still struggles and hopes for life. Turn back, my son; we can do nothing against them."

"I will not turn back," I whispered. "I will not turn back."

"I will help you; but I cannot speak for the others. They may and they may not."

We had spoken only when the sentry had been at a distance, falling into silence each time he approached the point where we stood. In the intervals of silence I could hear the growing restlessness of the prisoners and I guessed that what I had said to the first man was being passed around from mouth to mouth within until already the whole adjacent shed was seething with something akin to excitement. I wondered if it would arouse their spirit sufficiently to carry them through the next ten minutes. If it did success was assured.

Father had told me all that I wanted to know-the location of the guard house and the barracks and the number of Kash Guard posted here-only fifty men

to guard five thousand! How much more eloquently than words did this fact bespeak the humiliation of the American people and the utter contempt in which our scurvy masters hold us-fifty men to guard five thousand!

And then I started putting my plan into execution-a mad plan which had only its madness to recommend it. The sentry approached and came opposite where I stood and I leaped for the eaves as I had leaped for the eaves of the prison pen at Chicago, only this time I leaped from the outside where the eaves are closer to the ground and so the task was easier. I leaped and caught hold. Then I scrambled up behind the sentry and before his dull wits told him that there was some one behind him I was upon his back and the same fingers that threw a mad bull closed upon his windpipe. The struggle was brief-he died quickly and I lowered him to the roof. Then I took his uniform from him and donned it, with his ammunition belt, and I took his rifle and started out upon his post, walking with slow tread and with my chin upon my breast as he had walked.

At the end of my post I waited for the sentry I saw coming up and when he was close to me I turned back and he turned back away from me. Then I wheeled and struck him an awful blow upon the head with my rifle. He died more quickly than the other-instantly, I should say.

I took his rifle and ammunition from him and lowered them inside the pen to waiting hands. Then I went on to the next sentry, and the next, until I had slain five more and passed their rifles to the prisoners below. While I was doing this five prisoners who had volunteered to father climbed to the roof of the shed and stripped the dead men of their uniforms and donned them.

It was all done quietly and in the black night none might see what was going on a few feet away. I had to stop when I came near to the guard house. There I turned back and presently slid into the pen with my accomplices who had been going among the other prisoners with father arousing them to mutiny. Now were most of them ready to follow me, for so far my plan had proven successful. With equal quietness we overcame the men at the guard house and then moved on in a silent body toward the barracks.

So sudden and so unexpected was our attack that we met with little resistance. We were almost five thousand to forty now. We swarmed in upon them like wild beasts upon a foe and we shot them and bayonetted them until none remained alive. Not one escaped. And now we were flushed with success so that the most spiritless became a veritable lion for courage.

We who had taken the uniform of the Kash Guard discarded them for our own garb, as we had no mind to go abroad in the hated livery of our oppressors. That very night we saddled their horses with the fifty saddles that were there and fifty men rode the balance of the horses bareback. That made one hundred mounted men and the others were to follow on foot-to Chicago. "On to Chicago!" was our slogan.

We traveled cautiously, though I had difficulty in making them do so, so intoxicated were they with their first success. I wanted to save the horses and also I wanted to get as many men into Chicago as possible, so we let the weakest ride, while those of us who were strong walked, though I had a time of it getting Red Lightning to permit another on his sleek back.

Some fell out upon the way from exhaustion or from fear, for the nearer Chicago we approached the more their courage ebbed. The very thought of the feared Kalkars and their Kash Guard took the marrow from the bones of many. I do not know that one may blame them, for the spirit of man can endure only so much and when it is broken only a miracle can mend it in the same generation.

We reached the ruined church a week from the day I left mother and Juana there and we reached it with less than two thousand men, so rapid had been the desertion in the last few miles before we entered the district.

Father and I could scarcely wait to see our loved ones and so we rode on ahead to greet them, and inside the church we found three dead goats and a dying woman-my mother with a knife protruding from her breast. She was still conscious when we entered and I saw a great light of happiness in her eyes as they fell upon father and upon me. I looked around for Juana and my heart stood still, fearing that I would not find her-and fearing that I would.

Mother could still speak, and as we leaned over her as father held her in his arms she breathed a faint story of what had befallen them. They had lived in peace until that very day when the Kash Guard had stumbled upon them-a large detachment under Or-tis himself. They had seized them to take them away; but mother had had a knife hidden in her clothing and had utilized it as we saw rather than suffer the fate she knew awaited them. That was all, except that Juana had had no knife and Or-tis had carried her off.

I saw mother die, then, in father's arms and I helped him bury her after our men came and we had shown them what the beasts had done, though they knew well enough and had suffered themselves enough to know what was to be expected of the swine.

CHAPTER XI.

THE BUTCHER

WE WENT on then, father and I filled with grief and bitterness and hatred even greater than we had known before. We marched toward the market place of our district, and on the way we stopped at Jim's and he joined us. Mollie wept when she heard what had befallen mother and Juana but presently she controlled herself and urged us on and Jim with us, though Jim needed no urging. She kissed him good-by with tears and pride mingled in her eyes, and all he said was: "Good-bye, girl. Keep your knife with you always."

And so we rode away with Mollie's "May the Saints be with you!" in our ears. Once again we stopped, at our abandoned goat pens, and there we dug

up the rifle, belt and ammunition of the soldier father had slain years before. These we gave to Jim.

Before we reached the market place our force commenced to dwindle again-most of them could not brave the terrors of the Kash Guard upon which they had been fed in whispered story and in actual experience since infancy. I do not say that these men were cowards-I do not believe that they were cowards and yet they acted like cowards. It may be that a lifetime of training had taught them so thoroughly to flee the Kash Guard that now no amount of urging could make them face it. The terror had become instinctive as is man's natural revulsion for snakes. They could not face the Kash Guard any more than some men can touch a rattler, even though it may be dead.

It was market day and the place was crowded. I had divided my force so that we marched in from two directions in wide fronts, about five hundred men in each party, and surrounded the market place. As there were only a few men from our district among us, I had given orders that there was to be no killing other than that of Kash Guards until we who knew the population could pick out the right men.

When the nearest people first saw us they did not know what to make of it, so complete was the surprise. Never in their lives had they seen men of their own class armed and there were a hundred of us mounted. Across the plaza a handful of Kash Guard were lolling in front of Hoffmeyer's office. They saw my party first, as the other was coming up from behind them, and they mounted and came toward us. At the same moment I drew the Flag from my breast and, waving it above my head, urged Red Lightning forward, shouting, as I rode: "Death to the Kash Guard! Death to the Kalkars!"

And then, of a sudden, the Kash Guard seemed to realize that they were confronted by an actual force of armed men and their true color became apparent-all yellow. They turned to flee, only to see another force behind them. The people had now caught the idea and the spirit of our purpose and they flocked around us shouting, screaming, laughing, crying.

"Death to the Kash Guard!" "Death to the Kalkars!" "The Flag!" I heard more than once, and "Old Glory!" from some who, like myself, had not been permitted to forget. A dozen men rushed to my side and grasping the streaming banner pressed it to their lips, while tears coursed down their cheeks. "The Flag! The Flag!" they cried. "The Flag of our fathers!"

It was then, before a shot had been fired, that one of the Kash Guard rode toward me with a white cloth above his head. I recognized him immediately as the youth who had brought the cruel order to mother and who had shown sorrow for the acts of his superiors.

"Do not kill us," he said, "and we will join with you. Many of the Kash Guard at the barracks will join, too."

And so the dozen soldiers in the market place joined us, and a woman ran from her house carrying the head

of a man stuck upon a short pole and she screamed forth her hatred against the Kalkars-the hatred that was the common bond between us all. As she came closer I saw that it was Pthav's woman and the head upon the short pole was the head of Pthav. That was the beginning-that was the little spark that was needed. Like maniacs, laughing horribly, the people charged the houses of the Kalkars and dragged them forth to death.

Above the shrieking and the groans and the din could be heard shouts for the Flag and the names of loved ones who were being avenged. More than once I heard the name of Samuels the Jew. Never was a man more thoroughly avenged than he that day.

Dennis Corrigan was with us, freed from the mines, and Betty Worth, his woman found him there, his arms red to the elbows with the blood of our oppressors. She had never thought to see him alive, and when she heard his story, and of how they had escaped, she ran to me and nearly pulled me from Red Lightning's back trying to hug and kiss me.

It was she who started the people shouting for me until a mad, swirling mob of joy-crazed people surrounded me. I tried to quiet them, for I knew that this was no way in which to forward our cause, and finally I succeeded in winning a partial silence. Then I told them that this madness must cease, that we had not yet succeeded, that we had won only a single small district and that we must go forward quietly and in accordance with a sensible plan if we were to be victorious.

"Remember," I admonished them, "that there are still thousands of armed men in the city and that we must overthrow them all, and then there are other thousands that the Twenty-Four will throw in upon us for they will not surrender this territory until they are hopelessly defeated from here to Washington-and that will require months and maybe years."

They quieted down a little then and we formed plans for marching immediately upon the barracks that we might take the Kash Guard by surprise. It was about this time that father found Soor and killed him.

"I told you," said father, just before he ran a bayonet through the tax collector, "that some day I would have my little joke, and this is the day."

Then a man dragged Hoffmeyer from some hiding place and the people literally tore him to pieces, and that started the pandemonium all over again. There were cries of "On to the barracks!" and "Kill the Kash Guard!" followed by a concerted movement toward the lake front. On the way our numbers were increased by volunteers from every house-either fighting men and women from the houses of our class, or bloody heads from the houses of the Kalkars, for we carried them all with us, waving above us upon the ends of poles and at the head of all I rode with Old Glory, now waving from a tall staff.

I tried to maintain some semblance of order, but it was impossible, and so we streamed along, screaming and kill-

ing, laughing and crying, each as the mood claimed him. The women seemed the maddest, possibly because they had suffered most, and Pthav's woman led them. I saw others there with one hand clutching a suckling baby to a bare breast while the other held aloft the dripping head of a Kalkar, an informer, or a spy. One could not blame them who knew the lives of terror and hopelessness they had led.

We had just crossed the new bridge over the river into the heart of the great, ruined city, when the Kash Guard fell upon us from ambush with their full strength. They were poorly disciplined; but they were armed, while we were not disciplined at all nor scarcely armed. We were nothing but an angry mob into which they poured volley after volley at close range.

Men, women and babies went down and many turned and fled; but there were others who rushed forward and grappled hand to hand with the Kash Guard, tearing their rifles from them. We who were mounted rode among them. I could not carry the Flag and fight, so I took it from the staff and replaced it inside my shirt and then I clubbed my rifle and guiding Red Lightning with my knees I drove into them.

God of our fathers! But it was a pretty fight. If I had known that I was to die the next minute I would have died gladly for the joy I had in those few minutes. Down they went before me, to right and to left reeling from their saddles with crushed skulls and broken bodies, for wherever I hit them made no difference, in the result-they died if they came within reach of my rifle, which was soon only a bent and twisted tube of bloody metal.

And so I rode completely through them with a handful of men behind me. We turned then to ride back over the crumbling ruins that were in this spot only mounds of debris and from the elevation of one of these hillocks of the dead past I saw the battle down by the river and a great lump came into my throat. It was all over-all but the bloody massacre. My poor mob had turned at last to flee. They were jammed and stuck upon the narrow bridge and the Kash Guard were firing volleys into that wedged mass of human flesh. Hundreds were leaping into the river only to be shot from the banks by the soldiers.

Twenty-five mounted men surrounded me-all that was left of my fighting force-and at least two thousand Kash Guard lay between us and the river. Even could we have fought our way back we could have done nothing to save the day or our own people. We were doomed to die, but we decided to inflict more punishment before we died.

I had in mind Juana in the clutches of Or-tis-not once had the frightful thought left my consciousness-and so I told them that I would ride to headquarters and search for her and they said that they would ride with me and that we would slay whom we could before the soldiers returned.

Our dream had vanished, our hopes were dead. In silence we rode through the streets toward the barracks. The Kash Guard had not come over to our side as we had hoped-possibly they

would have come had we some measure of success in the city; but there could be no success against armed troops for a mob of men, women and children.

I realized too late that we had not planned sufficiently, yet we might have won had not some one escaped and ridden ahead to notify the Kash Guard. Could we have taken them by surprise in the barracks the outcome might have been what it had been in the market places through which we had passed. I had realized our weakness and the fact that if we took time to plan and arrange some spy or informer would have divulged all to the authorities long before we could have put our plans into execution. Really, there had been no other way than to trust to a surprise attack and the impetuosity of our first blow.

I looked about among my followers as we rode along.

Jim was there, but not father-I never saw him again. He probably fell in the battle at the new bridge. Orrin Colby, blacksmith and preacher, rode at my side, covered with blood-his own and Kash Guard. Dennis Corrigan was there, too.

We rode right into the barrack yard, for with their lack of discipline and military efficiency they had sent their whole force against us with the exception of a few men who remained to guard the prisoners and a handful at headquarters building. The latter was overcome with scarcely a struggle and from one whom I took prisoner I learned where the sleeping quarters of Or-tis were located.

Telling my men that our work was done I ordered them to scatter and escape as best they might, but they said that they would remain with me. I told them that the business I was on was such that I must handle it alone and asked them to go and free the prisoners while I searched for Juana. They said that they would wait for me outside and we parted.

Or-tis's quarters were on the second floor of the building in the east wing and I had no difficulty in finding them. As I approached the door I heard the sound of voices raised in anger within and of rapid movement as though some one was running hither and thither across the floor. I recognized Or-tis's voice-he was swearing foully, and then I heard a woman's scream and I knew it was Juana.

I tried the door and found it locked. It was a massive door, such as the ancients built in their great public buildings, such as this had originally been, and I doubted my ability to force it. I was mad with apprehension and lust for revenge and if maniacs gain tenfold in strength when the madness is upon them I must have been a maniac that moment, for when, after stepping back a few feet, I hurled myself against the door, the shot bolt tore through the splintering frame and the barrier swung in upon its hinges with a loud bang.

Before me, in the center of the room, stood Or-tis with Juana in his clutches. He had her partially upon a table and with one hairy hand he was choking her. He looked up at the noise of my sudden entry, and when he saw me he went

white and dropped Juana, at the same time whipping a pistol from its holster at his side. Juana saw me, too, and springing for his arm dragged it down as he pulled the trigger so that the bullet went harmlessly into the floor.

Before he could shake her off I was upon him and had wrenched the weapon from his grasp. I held him in one hand as one might a little child-he was utterly helpless in my grip-and I asked Juana if he had wronged her.

"Not yet," she said, "he just came in after sending the Kash Guard away. Something has happened. There is going to be a battle; but he sneaked back to the safety of his quarters."

Then she seemed to notice for the first time that I was covered with blood. "There has been a battle!" she cried, "and you have been in it."

I told her that I had and that I would tell her about it after I had finished Ortis. He commenced to plead and then to whimper. He promised me freedom and immunity from punishment and persecution if I would let him live. He promised never to bother Juana again and to give us his protection and assistance. He would have promised me the sun and the moon, and all the little stars, had he thought I wished them, but I wished only one thing just then and I told him so-to see him die.

"Had you wronged her," I said, "you would have died a slow and terrible death; but I came in time to save her, and so you are saved that suffering."

When he realized that nothing could save him he began to weep, and his knees shook so that he could not stand, and I had to hold him from the floor with one hand and with my other clenched I dealt him a single terrific blow between the eyes-a blow that broke his neck and crushed his skull. Then I dropped him to the floor and took Juana in my arms.

Quickly, as we walked toward the entrance of the building, I told her of all that had transpired since we parted, and that now she would be left alone in the world for a while, until I could join her. I told her where to go and await me in a forgotten spot I had discovered upon the banks of the old canal on my journey to the mines. She cried and clung to me, begging to remain with me but I knew it could not be, for already I could hear fighting in the yard below. We would be fortunate indeed if one of us escaped. At last she promised on condition that I would join her immediately, which, of course, I had intended doing as soon as I had the chance.

Red Lightning stood where I had left him before the door. A company of Kash Guard, evidently returning from the battle, were engaged with my little band that was slowly falling back toward the headquarters building. There was no time to be lost if Juana was to escape. I lifted her to Red Lightning's back from where she stooped, and threw her dear arms about my neck, covering my lips with kisses.

"Come back to me soon," she begged, "I need you so-and it will not be long before there will be another to need you, too."

I pressed her close to my breast.

"And if I do not come back," I said "take this and give it to my son to guard as his fathers before him have." I placed the Flag in her hands.

The bullets were singing around us and I made her go, watching her as the noble horse raced swiftly across the parade and disappeared among the ruins to the west. Then I turned to the fighting to find but ten men left to me. Orrin Colby was dead and Dennis Corrigan. Jim was left and nine others. We fought as best we could, but we were cornered now, for other guards were streaming onto the parade from other directions and our ammunition was expended.

They rushed us then-twenty to one-and though we did the best we could they overwhelmed us. Lucky Jim was killed instantly, but I was only stunned by a blow upon the head.

That night they tried me before a court-martial and tortured me in an effort to make me divulge the names of my accomplices. But there were none left alive that I knew of, even had I wished to betray them. As it was, I just refused to speak. I never spoke again after bidding Juana goodbye, other than the few words of encouragement that passed between those of us who remained fighting to the last.

Early the next morning I was led forth to the butcher.

I recall every detail up to the moment the knife touched my throat; there was a slight stinging sensation followed instantly by oblivion.

It was broad daylight when he finished; so quickly had the night sped and I could see by the light from the port hole of the room where we sat that his face looked drawn and pinched and that even then he was suffering the sorrows and disappointments of the bitter, hopeless life he had just described.

I rose to retire. "That is all?" I asked.

"Yes," he replied, "that is all of that re-incarnation."

"But you recall another?" I persisted. He only smiled as I was closing the door.